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# **The Evolution of Women's Intercollegiate Athletics at Oberlin College**

**Leland J. Brandt  
History Honors Thesis  
April 25, 1992**

I was hopeful that there would be a change in both the men's and women's program. The women would become a little more competitive, but I was hoping that the men would become a little less cutthroat competitive...so you would humanize the men's program, but make the women's program a bit more real life. It is a competitive society. Basically, what I have discovered is that the women have imitated the men and the men haven't changed at all.

-Fred Shults, Physical Education  
Professor, discussing his hopes for  
Title IX and the future of athletics at  
Oberlin College.

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## Preface

Over two years ago, I read an article written in 1973 entitled "Sport is Unfair to Women." While researching possible honors topics, I remembered that article. Preliminary research uncovered a wealth of information on women's athletics, Title IX, and the continuing problems faced by female athletes. By sheer coincidence, I learned that Oberlin College was investigated for possible Title IX violations. Further inquiry revealed that little if any research existed concerning the history of Oberlin's young women's athletic program. Before I could say "Jack Scott," the topic entranced me, and I remain under its spell to this day. If ever I have experienced love with an academic project, this thesis embodies those feelings.

I became fascinated with how the program evolved to its present state. Working with the premise that Title IX provided a subtle impetus behind the growth of the women's athletic program at Oberlin College, I began my research. Many of the law's effects were hidden by the overwhelming personality of Jack Scott, the director of athletics in the early 1970s. Yet, I wanted to trace the major developments in the program to ascertain the causes behind these changes. I wanted to examine Oberlin College's response to a specific gender issue in light of federal legislation and a vocal constituency in favor of women's athletics.

I might note that I found it increasingly difficult to write impartially on this subject. I feel the tremendous weight of evidence made maintenance of a neutral stance an impossible task.

## Acknowledgments

Many people helped me with this thesis. Foremost was Carol Lasser, my sponsor. I think without her guidance and advice I probably would have spiraled off into the void of endless research and 600-page papers. I greatly appreciated her pulling in the reins or, on occasion, cracking the whip (albeit lightly) to help me see this project to fruition.

Special thanks must be given to members, past and present, of the Department of Athletics and Physical Education; Mary Culhane and Joe Gurtis who time and time again found the unfindable and remembered the colorful; and to Lisl Prater, Don Hunsinger, Dick Michaels and Fred Shults for providing insight and their memory of events past; and to Pat Milkovich for taking the time to answer my questions and no matter how repetitive or mundane not to mention all the paperwork she provided.

Additionally, I would like to thank Roland Baumann, Brian Williams, and Patrice Delewski of the Oberlin College Archives for all the time they spent finding files, photocopying and hunting down evasive documents; and the members of the library staff who assisted me in my research.

I am also very grateful to the people I dealt with outside of the College, Ellen Staurowsky, Judith Flohr, and Holly Sklar, whose insight provided me with a sense of atmosphere for the time periods in question. Also, thanks to Linda Carpenter and Vivian Acosta who supplied me with both information and inspiration to pursue this topic.

Not to be overlooked are all my friends who listened to me explain various aspects of my paper countless times and who visited me in my little room in the library to lend support.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents: my mother for empathizing with the hardships of writing a big paper; my father for providing simple, yet wonderfully sagely advice during the dark hours of this project.

### List of Recurring Abbreviations

IAIW -----Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women.  
CAC -----Centennial Athletic Conference.  
CFC -----College Faculty Council.  
EPPC -----Educational Plans and Policies Committee.  
GFC -----General Faculty Council.  
HEW -----Department of Health, Education and Welfare.  
NCAA -----National Collegiate Athletic Association.  
NCAC -----North Coast Athletic Conference.  
OAC -----Ohio Athletic Conference.  
OCR -----Office for Civil Rights, a branch of HEW, later the Department of Education.  
PAC -----President's Athletic Conference.

## Chapter I:

### The History of Title IX and Its Impact on Collegiate Athletics

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

-Section 901(a) of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

On June 23, 1972, Congress passed legislation that forever altered the face of women's collegiate athletics. Before its passage, 'playday' sessions de-emphasizing competition constituted most of the athletic activities available for women. Title IX almost immediately relegated the Victorian ideals about proper levels of female activity to the locker rooms of history and simultaneously initiated an explosion in the field of women's athletics.

#### What is Title IX?

Title IX built upon the foundations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) in attacking discrimination. But, while Title VI applied to race, Title IX addressed sex discrimination.

Though it applies to all areas in an institution, Title IX's greatest impact has been on collegiate athletics. In 1973, on average, men's collegiate athletic budgets received a staggering 97.9% of the total available athletic funding at Division I schools. In contrast, women's programs usually received 2.1%.<sup>1</sup> This disparity was a stark symbol of American society's reluctance to provide women with the same opportunity as men to pursue athletic activities. Athletic administrators claimed there was not sufficient interest to justify increasing the funding for the women's programs, ignoring the effect years of discouragement had wreaked upon the perspective female athletes in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup>United States Commission on Civil Rights, "More Hurdles to Clear, Women and Girls in Competitive Athletics," July 1980, p. 32. The financial inequity is one of numerous areas in athletics in which women were relegated to a distant second-class status. For an in depth analysis of gender inequity in athletics during the early 1970s see Bil Gilbert and Nancy Williamson's, Women in Sport, Three-part series, Sports Illustrated, May 28, June 4 and June 11, 1973.

Title IX upheld women's right to experience and participate in athletics. Yet, complaints quickly surfaced that the legislation was too vague and made implementation difficult. In response, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), the office charged with overseeing Title IX compliance, issued regulations in July of 1974 specifying the affected areas in athletics:

1. Effective accommodation of the interest and abilities of both sexes in the selection of sports and levels of competition.
2. Travel and per diem allowances.
3. Provision of locker rooms.
4. Provision of medical and training services and facilities.
5. Provision of housing and dining facilities and services.
6. Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring.
7. Provision and maintenance of equipment and supplies.
8. Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors.
9. Scheduling.
10. Publicity.
11. Recruitment.
12. Financial aid.<sup>2</sup>

HEW decided that colleges and universities should achieve compliance by July of 1978. The problem, critics claimed, was that the regulations failed to indicate how to determine whether an institution was or was not in compliance. On December 11, 1979, HEW issued a policy interpretation of Title IX that outlined the process institutions should use to assess and achieve compliance.

Of the twelve areas identified by HEW, financial aid was the only area specified that required a numerical comparison to determine compliance. HEW indicated that allocation of athletic aid should be proportionate to the percentage of male and female athletes. "For instance, if women constitute 30 percent of the athletes at a recipient institution, then HEW would expect that 30 percent of the financial assistance would be awarded to female athletes."<sup>3</sup>

HEW explained that the remaining areas would be evaluated in a less empirical manner:

Each of the program components should be 'equivalent, that is, equal or equal in effect,' but the components needs not be identical for men and women. If the components are not

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



equivalent, institutions may still be in compliance if the differences do not have a discriminatory effect.<sup>4</sup>

Failure to comply with Title IX carried as a possible penalty the loss of federal funding.

### The NCAA, AIAW and Their Clash Over Title IX

Title IX's passage did not elicit many exclamations of glee from the athletic establishment who viewed the legislation as an unwarranted intrusion into their domain. Title IX was a threat to the monopoly they held on athletic funding; consequently, they fought against it at every turn. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the organizing body for men's collegiate athletics, was the first to challenge Title IX. Walter Byers, the executive director, claimed that Title IX would destroy men's collegiate athletics and mean the "possible doom of intercollegiate sports."

The NCAA pursued several gambits to protect their lucrative athletic interests. Their efforts failed to exempt intercollegiate athletics from Title IX, so the NCAA sought to minimize the potency of the law. The NCAA's minions campaigned on the Tower Amendment to Title IX that would have exempted the so-called "revenue sports" from the law.<sup>6</sup> When this effort failed, the NCAA filed a lawsuit against HEW. They argued that Title IX's creators did not intend for it to apply to men's athletics.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the NCAA's Secretary-Treasurer, Edgar A. Sheer, claimed that HEW's implementation of Title IX was the result of the "entrenched sexism of HEW's cadre of young female lawyers."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>United States Commission on Civil Rights, "More Hurdles to Clear, Women and Girls in Collegiate Athletics," July 1980, pp. 33-34.

<sup>5</sup>Linda Jean Carpenter, "The Impact of Title IX on Women's Intercollegiate Sports," *Government and Society*, Arthur Johnson and James Frey, pp. 63-65.

<sup>6</sup>Candace Lyle Hogan, "Football must not be a sacred cow," *The Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1979. "revenue sports" were football and basketball. Interestingly enough, a 1978 NCAA study indicated that the collegiate football programs lost money. Whatever revenue they produced was used to defray the costs of the programs.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Cheryl M. Fields, "Both Sides Criticize Government on Enforcement of Anti-Sex-Bias Law," *Higher Education*, January 15, 1979, p. 12.

Opposing the NCAA's containment policy was the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the governing body for women's intercollegiate athletics. Founded in 1971, the AIAW promoted an alternative model for the administration of collegiate athletics. Stressing the educational aspects of athletics, the AIAW sought to provide a less exploitative athletic system than that offered by the NCAA.<sup>9</sup> They argued that not only should Title IX apply to all of collegiate athletics, but that the standards should be tighter and the deadlines for compliance less lenient.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, The AIAW countered many of the NCAA's claims with damning evidence that revealed their hollowness.

The AIAW pointed to an NCAA report entitled "Revenues and Expenses of Intercollegiate Athletic Programs" as proof that many of the NCAA's cries of impending financial ruin were untrue. A 1978 survey provided further evidence, revealing that:

...The average men's athletic budget in NCAA division I institutions has risen from \$1,232,000 in 1973-4 to \$1,656,000 in this [1978-79] school year. That is an increase of \$424,000. The average women's athletic budget in NCAA division I schools this year [1978-79] is \$276,000. The *increase alone* in the men's budgets has been more than 50 percent greater than the *total* currently given to women.<sup>11</sup>

Title IX provided the NCAA with the perfect scapegoat with which to lay the blame for any financial difficulties. It further allowed them to increase their budgets, even if the money went to the men, plowing the athletic department and the school further into the red, all under the pretense of improving the women's programs. Any budgetary excesses were easily blamed on the demands of women's athletics. These claims contradicted the NCAA's own report that indicated that, "72% of the cost increase in athletics from the

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<sup>9</sup>At the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport's (NAGWS) symposium on "Girls and Women in Sport" Christine Grant, the women's athletic director at the University of Iowa, gave a speech entitled "The legacy of girls and women in sport." In it she spelled out many of the AIAW's guiding principles: Opportunity for women; fiscally prudent; welfare of student-athlete is most important; a democratic system of elections; guaranteed minority representation; 28% student-athlete representation on all boards/committees; due process system for grievances; inexpensive, non-harassing recruitment system; develop quality leaders for women's athletics. She also referred to Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, discussing the different value structures employed by men and women and how the NCAA and AIAW's approach's embodied many of these differences.

<sup>10</sup>Title IX was passed in 1972, but compliance was not expected until 1979. The AIAW claimed that a seven-year waiting period only encouraged continued violations and further entrenched existing problems.

<sup>11</sup>Candace Lyle Hogan, "Football is Hardly Sugar Daddy," *The New York Times*, December 10, 1978. Emphasis in original.

fiscal year in 1970 to 1977 was due to inflationary effects and uncontrollable price increases related to maintaining existing programs.”<sup>12</sup>

### The Ironic Impact of Title IX

From its passage in 1972 through the present, Title IX has had three main effects.

First, Many schools interpreted Title IX’s passage as mandating the unification of men’s and women’s athletic departments into one joint department. Unification usually meant the absorption of the women’s program, effectively stripping it of its independence. The women’s athletic director became the an assistant athletic director, answering to the men’s athletic director, a man.<sup>13</sup>

Second, Title IX caused the demise of the AIAW. By the late 1970s, the AIAW had secured contracts to televise some of the championship events it sponsored. The AIAW’s success in some areas of women’s athletics had shown their lucrative profit-making potential. By the end of 1979, the NCAA announced that it was considering holding five championships (basketball, field hockey, swimming, tennis and volleyball) for women. This move set off a huge debate over which body should control women’s athletics.

The NCAA claimed its newfound support of Title IX and women’s sports came about because, “such a move was mandated by Title IX and to do less would be to violate its responsibilities under Title IX.”<sup>14</sup> The AIAW questioned the NCAA’s motives, noting its long-standing opposition to Title IX and women’s athletics. “Some have intimated that the NCAA adopted this posture...to at least guarantee the NCAA control over women’s athletics if in fact it was inevitable that title IX would apply to athletics.”<sup>15</sup>

A successful NCAA coup would mean a complete restructuring of the regulations governing women’s athletics so that they paralleled the men’s programs. Even more

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Murray Sperber, College Sports Inc., The Athletic Department vs. The University. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), pp. 324-5.

<sup>14</sup>Carpenter, “Impact,” pp. 63-65.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

disturbing was the ensured dismantling of an autonomous organizational structure designed, operated and used by women.

The NCAA's proposed plan guaranteed women 31% representation on the lesser committees, and only 18% on the executive board. These numbers ignored women's position as roughly 50% of the collegiate student population and their growing representation in collegiate athletics. The implication of the percentage allotments was that the NCAA wanted to control women's sports, but did not care to give the women a voice in their own destiny.<sup>16</sup>

The NCAA offered several incentives to persuade college's to switch from the AIAW to the NCAA. These included paying a school's travel expenses and providing broadcast coverage.

At the 1980 NCAA convention, women's championships were established:

...Instead of proposing and discussing championships for women's sports, it [the NCAA] established a number of them by *fiat*...Even some male NCAA delegates were appalled; one described the association's move as 'an act of arrogance...in which six hundred men decided to be the shepherds to women's programs.'<sup>17</sup>

In light of these moves by the NCAA, only 95 of the AIAW's 971 members elected to send delegates to the 1982 convention. In June of 1982, the AIAW folded. The NCAA had successfully annexed women's athletics.<sup>18</sup> The NCAA allowed one vote per school, which was usually cast by the athletic director, a man.

The third effect of Title IX was in many ways the most ironic. Title IX provided the impetus for women to assert their right to an athletic program, and many of them did so as the number of women who participated in intercollegiate athletics soared from 16,000 in 1966-67 to 150,000 in 1983-84, a growth of nearly 1,000 percent.<sup>19</sup> Concurrently, the number of women coaching and administering these programs began a precipitous decline.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Sperber, p. 325.

<sup>18</sup>Sperber, p. 326.

<sup>19</sup>Carpenter, "Impact," pp. 65.

In 1972, women administrated over 90 percent of women's athletic programs. By 1990, that number had declined to 15.9 percent. This was a direct result of the unification trend that began in the early 1970s. Similarly, in 1972, women coached 90 percent of the women's teams, but by 1990 women held only 47.3 percent of the women's coaching positions.<sup>20</sup> Female coaches were increasingly replaced by males who saw women's teams, "as excellent entries into the college coaching profession."<sup>21</sup> Again, the unification trend played a role since the male athletic directors predominantly hired coaches of their own gender, even for women's teams.

### Grove City and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988

Grove City College accepted no federal funding except for BEOG-Pell grants, which went directly to the students. The school refused to sign a letter guaranteeing its compliance with Title IX for the Department of Education (it had succeeded HEW). The school's athletic program was in compliance, but the administrators disagreed with the principle of federal intervention. The Department of Education stopped the grants to Grove City. In response, Grove City filed a lawsuit in 1978 that went in front of the Supreme Court in 1984.

The court ruled on two parts of the suit. First, it determined that the BEOG-Pell grants constituted the reception of federal funds, and as a result mandated compliance with Title IX. Second, the court interpreted the wording of Title IX, specifically the word "program," as meaning only the department that directly received money was liable for Title IX compliance. If a department received no money, then any discrimination was not actionable under Title IX. The court determined that the BEOG-Pell grants did not directly fund Grove City's athletic department. Consequently, athletic departments were exempted from Title IX.

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<sup>20</sup>R. Vivian Acosta and Linda Jean Carpenter, "Women In Intercollegiate Sport, A longitudinal Study-Thirteen Year Update 1977-90," 1990. Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

<sup>21</sup>Sperber; Acosta and Carpenter.

There was not a great degree of satisfaction with this decision and many forces lobbied for a rectifying move. In 1987, congress passed the Civil Rights Restoration Act that stated that Title IX should have meant the whole institution when it said "program." President Reagan vetoed it. In 1988, Congress rallied enough votes to override the veto.

It was against this background of federal legislation and reorientation of collegiate athletic associations that women's athletics at Oberlin College evolved.

## Chapter II:

### Oberlin College's Physical Education Department before 1972

Before 1969, Oberlin College had separate Physical Education departments for men and women. The women's Physical Education Department was a traditional program emphasizing academics and participatory, non-competitive sports. Department Chairman Betty McCue wrote about some of these activities:

This year's "Yale-Princeton" game and song contest, climax of the women's basketball season at Oberlin College, was the 57th successive annual Y-P game to be held on the campus. This event is now observed by coeducational spectators, and the winning songs continue to be sung at dorm get-togethers. Rule changes in women's basketball and a fine degree of skill are regularly demonstrated in the game.<sup>22</sup>

The event was more important than the result. The department celebrated the camaraderie and skills displayed without reference to score or competition. A department letter noted that, "Recreational special events, such as play days followed by picnics are increasingly popular."<sup>23</sup>

The only athletics programs available to women in the 1960s were the intramural and extramural programs. The intramural program was very popular, stocked with teams from the conservatory, dormitories and each class. The extramural program involved contests against teams from other schools, but differed from intercollegiate athletics by stressing participation over competition. The women's extramural basketball team of 1968-69 decided to wear blue-jean cutoff shorts and T-shirts rather than uniforms since they did not want to appear "too competitive."<sup>24</sup>

In 1969, an outside group of advisers evaluated Oberlin's Physical Education Department. They recommended the men's and women's Physical Education Departments

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<sup>22</sup>Women's Department of Physical Education, "Letter to Alumni," February 1964. Oberlin College Archives, hereafter referred to as OCA.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Author's interview with Mary Culhane, Oberlin, Ohio, December 10, 1991.

be merged into one. The new department would consist of separate sections for men's and women's athletics.<sup>25</sup>

The women's physical education department shared many characteristics with other programs across the nation. Its faculty "carried the major" since most of the men had coaching responsibilities. The academic major included classes in kinesiology (the study of principles of mechanics and anatomy of human movement), coaching methodology, and the sociological aspects of sports. Most activity classes were, "non-competitive forms of movement," such as archery and folk dancing.<sup>26</sup> Robert Longworth, Professor of English, described a major change in the department that was one of the earliest signs that a shift was taking place in the perception of the department's purpose:

The critical point that came when modern dance separated from Physical Education...and became a separate program. Betty Lind was hired to teach modern dance in the physical education department. She rebelled at that, she just didn't see this as being consistent with the philosophy of athletics...And she thought that [competitive athletics] was what belonged in Physical Education. It had really become a different field.<sup>27</sup>

Physical Education was moving away from the intellectual discipline and towards a program of competitive athletics. However, societal taboos, restrictions, and conservative ideologies about women participating in competitive sports had retarded the rate of change in the women's athletics nationally and at Oberlin. The separation of the dance major from the department signalled the onset of a new age for women's athletics at Oberlin.

An integrated department represented an immense shift in direction for the two departments which had grown accustomed to functioning independently, in their own

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<sup>25</sup>Dean Donald R. Reich, "Athletic Advisory Committee, Report on Athletic Policy," June 1, 1969. The strongest criticism in the report was made in relation to a problem in the women's program:

...the committee was appalled by the fact that the women's Department of Physical Education finds it necessary to duplicate the work of the registrar's office for all women enrolled in physical education classes. This practice should be abandoned and the secretarial time involved should be utilized to reduce the faculty teaching load." III b. OCA.

<sup>26</sup>Author's interview with Robert Longworth, Professor of English, Oberlin, Ohio, April 14, 1992. Professor Longworth used to be the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in the mid 1970s to mid 1980s

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.



buildings, and subscribing to their own methods and philosophies.<sup>28</sup> Preexisting differences between the two departments seemed irreconcilable. Their merger meant that one department would be assimilated into the other and effectively lose its identity.

The recommendation to unify the department reflected the national movement towards singular Physical Education Departments. Generally, unification meant that the Director of the women's program usually became an assistant director in the new departmental structure. The submerging of the women's programs meant that men usually made the final decisions on issues that affected women. The case was the same at Oberlin.

Dean Donald Reich analyzed the department's five years prior to 1972. The title of his report "The Rebuilding of Physical Education" accurately reflected his findings. He recognized that Physical Education was changing, but felt, "those changes were not being reflected at Oberlin."<sup>29</sup> The two departments had responded negatively to the panel's proposals for an integrated department. The women's faculty replied that, "coeducation is increasing, but some members believe the men's department has not always shared interest and teaching responsibilities in co-ed classes."<sup>30</sup>

After establishing a cross-departmental committee, the two departments agreed to unify on the condition that the department be enlarged. "On December 2, the CFC and EPPC presented a motion to the college faculty meeting for a merger of the men's and women's departments into a single department to be known as the Department of Physical Education."<sup>31</sup> The next step for the newly created department was the selection of a chairman. After many meetings, the department was unable to get the required two-thirds majority for any candidate. Dean Reich attributed the stalemate to the conflicting ideologies within the faculty:

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<sup>28</sup>Reich, "Report on Athletic Policy." For years, the women's program operated in Hales gymnasium and the men's program had operated out of Warner gymnasium. Men had to ask permission and arrange to get permission to use Crane Pool in the women's building. The advisory committee told the department to assign areas on, "the basis of 'program' and 'function' rather on the basis of sex."

<sup>29</sup>Dean Donald R. Reich, "The Rebuilding of Physical Education, A report on efforts over a 5 year period to renew the teaching of physical education at Oberlin," November 1972, p.2. OCA.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p. 16.

The 'message' that was left with me by the Council members as a result of this experience was unambiguous; some members of the PE department had seemed unwilling to welcome leadership that could come from a recognizable, high-quality, person outside the physical education department.<sup>32</sup>

Eventually, the department chose a member of the PE faculty, Bill Tidwell, as the first unified Physical Education chairman. He faced the difficult task of overseeing the integration of a department staffed with members who were unwilling to assist the process. Reich explained the situation in the department: "There were times when it seemed to me that those members of the department who saw the need for change and sought ways bring it about were not merely pessimistic--they were in despair."<sup>33</sup> Mr. Tidwell left Oberlin during the 1971-72 school year and was replaced by Julian Smith on an interim basis. Ruth Brunner, formerly the chairman of Department of Physical Education for women, wrote candidly about the situation in the unified department:

First, I do not regret seeing Bill leave because, as you [Dean Reich] will recall, he was the only candidate from among our ranks that had any support as chairman. Bill has succeeded as well as anyone from our faculty could have been expected to do. However, even then it was the considered opinion of members of the Women's Department that a merger could only work if a chairman were brought in "from the outside."<sup>34</sup>

Bill Tidwell's departure coincided with two major events in the women's athletic program of Oberlin College. In 1972, the passage of Title IX would tap into and assist the development of the female athletic consciousness at Oberlin. Women had begun to develop an interest in competition that motivated many of them to press the department and administration for better support financially and in the coaching ranks.<sup>35</sup> The second event was the arrival of Jack Scott, a self-proclaimed "sports radical," who came from not only outside of Oberlin, but outside the athletic mainstream.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, pp. 22-3.

<sup>34</sup>Ruth Brunner to Dean Reich, May 15, 1971. OCA.

<sup>35</sup>Author's interview with Mary Culhane.

## Chapter III:

In the Shadow of Jack Scott,  
Oberlin College's Women's Athletic Program and Title IX

The concept of 'varsity athlete' itself has changed...In the past, the phrase 'Varsity athlete' has almost always referred to a varsity athletic program for men. Such use of the terms like "varsity" "sports" "athletics" "competition" etc. in a strictly male context is no longer tenable, and all members of the department interviewed, and all students interviewed recognized the emergence of a strong interest in athletics for women. Most recognized that some women were anxious for an expanded varsity program for women. Many also perceived a substantial budgetary inequity with respect to the men's program versus the women's program.

-Excerpt from the 1973  
Educational Plans and Policies  
Committee review of the PE  
Department<sup>36</sup>

Women's sports [at Oberlin] would have gone nowhere fast if Jack Scott hadn't been there.

-Former Oberlin College student and  
athlete Holly Sklar.<sup>37</sup>

On July 1, 1972, Oberlin College hired Jack Scott as its new athletic director and Physical Education Department Chairman to replace Bill Tidwell, who had left the school. While Mr. Scott spent less than two years in the College's employment, his tenure had such an overwhelming effect as to overshadow much of the national athletic news concerning Title IX.

There are two diametrically opposite viewpoints on Mr. Scott's performance and each of them has a degree of validity. Some claim he was a progressive thinker and staunch supporter of women's athletics. Opponents of this viewpoint describe him as a stubborn, threatening figure who saw women's athletics a little more than "foils in his plans."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>"Departmental Review of Physical Education: Subcommittee report as amended and adopted by EPPC," May 22, 1973. p. 13. OCA.

<sup>37</sup>Author's interview with Holly Sklar, March 26, 1992. Ms. Sklar currently resides in Boston, MA.

<sup>38</sup>Barbara Calmer's interview with the CFC. October 21, 1972.

Dissatisfied with both the effort and results of the previous chairman search, Dean Reich appointed a special council to hire the next chairman. Ninety-three people applied for the position. Advisers told the council that, "any chairman appointed from outside the college would need to make several additional new appointments rather quickly if he were to be expected to rejuvenate the Oberlin program."<sup>39</sup> Ms. Brunner added that the chairman should be qualified to "provide leadership" in "the new direction of physical education."<sup>40</sup> With these criteria in mind, the Council selected Jack Scott as the next Chairman of the Physical Education Department.

After graduating from Syracuse University, Mr. Scott attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley. Upon receiving his Ph.D., he founded the Institute for the Study of Sport and Society (ISSS) to, "help interpret what's going on in sport and make it what it can and should be."<sup>41</sup> He wrote two books Athletics for Athletes and The Athletic Revolution which thrust him to the fore of sport sociology and criticism of contemporary athletics.

Mr. Scott claimed the dominant sports ethic in the United States was best summarized by Vince Lombardi's statement that, "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."<sup>42</sup> He criticized this "Lombardian ethic" as excessively focused on the results of competition (i.e. winning and losing), to the point that it transformed opponents into enemies. Furthermore, "the Lombardian ethic views sport as a masculinity rite from which women are excluded."<sup>43</sup>

At the other extreme was the counterculture ethic. This view rejected the Lombardian ethic's focus on the results, instead favoring an emphasis on the activity itself. Mr. Scott explained, "a counter-culture runner wants to be concerned with how his run felt, not with how fast he covered the distance." Mr. Scott argued this system was equally faulty:

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<sup>39</sup>Dean Donald R. Reich, "The Rebuilding of Physical Education, A report on efforts over a 5 year period to renew the teaching of physical education at Oberlin," November 1972, pp. 26-27. OCA.

<sup>40</sup>Ruth Brunner to Dean, May 15, 1971. OCA.

<sup>41</sup>"Overhaul at Oberlin," Time, January 29, 1973. OCA.

<sup>42</sup>Mr. Lombardi was a successful head football coach for the Green Bay Packers in the Sixties.

<sup>43</sup>Jack Scott, "A Radical Ethic for Sports," in Stephanie L. Twin, Out of the Bleachers (McGraw-Hill: New York, 1979.), pp. 183-185.

To tell a competitive athlete, man or woman, who is training three and four hours a day, day-in-day-out, year after year, to not be concerned with victory is liberal snobbery...It is just as wrong to say winning isn't anything as it is to say winning is the only thing.<sup>44</sup>

Mr. Scott proposed a "radical ethic" as an alternative. He wanted sports and competition to be a total experience. "The radical ethic has no quarrel with the Lombardian quest for excellence. It only says that the means by which that excellence is achieved are as important as the excellence itself." This outlook avoided the development of many of the dehumanizing characteristics Scott perceived as plaguing men's sports. He charged the Lombardian ethic nurtured processes such as authoritarian coaches, drug use, sexism and racism in the all-or-nothing pursuit of victory. According to Mr. Scott's ethic, opponents would be, "a brother or sister who is presenting you with a challenge. You cannot experience the agonistic [sic] struggle of sport without him/her."<sup>45</sup>

Finally, his ethic did not deny women an opportunity to participate in sports. He felt that barring women from competing because of a disparity in athletic ability between men and women was misguided logic. He denounced double standards that enabled men to enjoy athletics, yet questioned the femininity of any woman who engaged in sports. He quoted Simone de Beauvoir:

...In sports the end in view is not success independent of physical equipment; it is really the arrangement of perfection within the limitations of each physical type: the featherweight boxing champion is as much of a champion as is the heavyweight; the woman skiing champion is not the inferior of the faster male champion; they belong to two different classes.<sup>46</sup>

He illustrated his point by analyzing a statement made about an accomplished female diver named Micki King. Her coach said, "he knew early in her career that she was going to be great because, 'she dives like a man.'" Scott pointed out, "she sure as hell doesn't

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid. p. 185.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Jack Scott, "Women in Sport: 'She Dives Like a Man,'" The Institute of the Study of Sport and Society, Berkeley, CA, p5. Excerpted from Simone de Beauvoir's, The Second Sex. OCA.

dive like me or any other man I ever met. In fact, she doesn't dive like 99 percent of the men in America. What she obviously does do is dive correctly."<sup>47</sup>

Mr. Scott's radical ethic provided a moral if not a philosophical justification for many of the sentiments contained in Title IX legislation. Therefore, it is not unusual that the two were similarly worded:

Consequently, the radical ethic says that women who want competitive sport experience should be provided with the economic and institutional support that men receive.<sup>48</sup>

### Mr. Scott Comes to Oberlin

Mr. Scott's ascent to the Physical Education chairmanship was impeded by faculty members wary of bringing a "radical" into the department. While Mr. Scott's role as a critic of the athletic status quo was appealing to some in the administration and the department, others feared the effects of his hiring.<sup>49</sup>

Mr. Scott's rocky employment history concerned many of the members of the department. In 1970, he had sued the University of Washington for withdrawing a job offer. The suit was settled out of court, but the event troubled the faculty.<sup>50</sup> They were curious what the University's motivation was for withdrawing the offer. They wondered if the retraction indicated a discovery of damaging information about Scott. Others theorized that Scott had never wanted the job, just the money. They reasoned that he played upon his "radicalness" to unnerve the university and precipitate the retraction, and thus the lawsuit.

The department voted 12-1 against his appointment. Many faculty members thought lacked sufficient qualifications, having no administrative experience and very limited teaching experience. In comparison with some of the other candidates, the 31-year old Scott seemed a poor choice.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid, pp. 2-3. Emphasis in original.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Reich, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Doug Learner, "Rethinking educational athletics," The Oberlin Review, February 1, 1979, pp. 4,13.

Ignoring the arguments against Mr. Scott, the College hired him as the Chairman and Athletic Director. Robert Fuller, the College's 36-year old President, saw hiring Mr. Scott as an opportunity for Oberlin to pave a new path for Physical Education. In addition, he hoped Mr. Scott could revive the faltering department that had been a leader in its field for many years. Fuller summarized his expectations in his introduction of the 31-year old Scott:

Jack Scott has become nationally known for his efforts to bring to organized athletics a more humane set of values. His desire to re-emphasize the athlete as an individual, and his scholarly and well-researched studies in this, will make him a highly-valued member of his community.<sup>52</sup>

Scott said he was, "extremely pleased and proud to become part of...one of the most progressive traditions of any college or university in the United States."<sup>53</sup> But, Mr. Scott found becoming part of the tradition a difficult task starting with the first time he set foot on the campus. Working in a department which was in disarray besides being unhappy with his hiring guaranteed Mr. Scott a troublesome working environment. Four members of the 14 person athletic department resigned after Scott's hiring with one of them warning that, "sports will be destroyed at Oberlin."<sup>54</sup>

Mr. Scott's early forays to Oberlin succeeded in worsening the already poor impression he'd made. During an early visit to Oberlin he described the College, students and faculty, as dehumanizing and racist. He claimed he would, "reverse dehumanization and losing."<sup>55</sup> His comments irritated faculty members and students proud of Oberlin's progressive history. The reception only worsened as Mr. Scott began to implement his ideas many of which involved women's athletics.

## The Michaels/Hunsinger Reappointment Debate

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<sup>52</sup>James G. Lubetkin, Oberlin College News, (Office of College Information), March 7, 1972. OCA.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>"Overhaul at Oberlin," Time, January 29, 1973, p. 53.

<sup>55</sup>"The Rad-Lib Sports Boss," The Plain Dealer, February 4, 1973. OCA.

Mr. Scott set the tone for his regime before even officially assuming his post. Two members of the Physical Education Department, Don Hunsinger and Dick Michaels, were up for reappointment. Scott drew the ire of faculty and students when he recommended the two be denied reappointment. On April 20, 1972, Mr. Scott explained his reasons in a letter to Dean Reich:

...Since our discipline is one of the few areas of higher education where the number of highly qualified women is comparable to that of men, we are upset by this imbalance [9 men to 5 women faculty] and are concerned with taking the necessary steps to correct it. This situation is of additional concern since approximately 45% of the students participating in our program are women, and this percentage will only increase as we begin to develop equal opportunity for women to participate in our intercollegiate sports program...As you well know, our department is in a period of transition and it is likely that our last opportunity to correct the male/female imbalance--as well as moving the department in new directions--could rest with a turn-over in the positions presently held by Mr. Michaels and Mr. Hunsinger.<sup>56</sup>

The Dean's special council had been advised that the new chairman would need to make new appointments quickly to rejuvenate the department. Mr. Scott's recommendation was in accordance with this advice. Unfortunately for Mr. Scott, both men were popular in the department and with the students. Lyle Butler, a former Athletic Director of the Physical Education department, thought Mr. Scott's ignorance of the of the two men's work made his suggestion unfounded.<sup>57</sup> Many students argued that the two coaches were supportive of women's athletics. A group of female students wrote in a letter that the, "redressing of the previous discrimination against women was to be applauded, but that it should not be done by failing to reappoint Mr. Michaels and Mr. Hunsinger."<sup>58</sup>

Yet, some faculty members and students agreed with Scott. They recognized that the department would most likely not receive the three or four additional faculty slots needed to balance the gender ratio. They saw using Mr. Michael's and Mr. Hunsinger's slots as the

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<sup>56</sup>Jack Scott, Chairman-elect Department of Physical Education to Donald A. Reich, Dean and the College Faculty Council, April 20, 1972. Cosigners of the letter were Ruth Brunner, Barbara Calmer, Mary Culhane, Fred Shults, Tommie Smith, and Janet Wignall. OCA.

<sup>57</sup>"Scott's Treatment of Present Staff Irks Butler," *The Journal*, May 10, 1972.

<sup>58</sup>Reich, "Rebuilding of Physical Education," p. 34. The authors of the letter are unidentified.



only other option available to balance the department. They agreed that the two men were capable coaches, but saw the need for equity as a higher priority:

...All new appointments and perhaps all reappointments should be considered in the light of the need to locate and appoint qualified women.<sup>59</sup>

They explained that hiring qualified women in the department would, "combat the stigma and alienation of women who participate in sport."<sup>60</sup>

Mr. Scott's recommendation by itself was laudable considering the reluctance to provide assistance for women's athletics that was prevalent in Physical Education and Athletic departments nationally. But, there were indications his interest in women's athletics existed only so that he could use it for furthering other goals.

Mr. Scott sought Mary Culhane and Jan Wignall's support on this recommendation. He approached them, asking them to sign the letter to Dean Reich. He told them that unless they sided with him on this issue, he'd never listen to them about the women's program. They signed the letter. "You could see how he operated, but you were caught," Ms. Culhane said. Mr. Scott's casual use of the women's program as a bargaining chip challenged the sincere interest in the program that he claimed.<sup>61</sup>

### Scott and the Women's Athletic Program

One of the two main causes Mr. Scott spoke of was improving women's sports. The results of Mr. Scott's efforts were mixed. Compared with the policies of athletic departments nationwide his ideas were innovative, however, his methods of implementation were medieval at times. His actions seemed to combine both honest efforts at advancing the women's program and apparent smoke screens intended to cloak an opportunistic attitude towards women's athletics.

A newspaper described one of Jack Scott's first acts as AD:

<sup>59</sup>Ibid. This quotation comes describes a letter to Dean Donald Reich, Scott and the College Faculty Council from a faculty representative.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid. This comes from a letter a group of 32 'concerned members of the OC community,' including 3 faculty members who, "wrote to me [Reich] of their 'concern for the needs of women in physical education.'"

<sup>61</sup>Author's interview with Mary Culhane.

...He and his wife Micki toured the new \$4,500,000 Philips Gymnasium and were shocked to see that only a tiny portion of the gymnasium had facilities for women...

...‘They had a small locker room in the corner,’ Scott said.

‘The whole thing was sort of symbolic of the way the people who built and structured the gymnasium considered it to be a male domain. So we moved the faculty locker room to give the women more room and then we had to make little adjustments just so they could use some of the facilities.’<sup>62</sup>

Title IX was less than a year old, yet Mr. Scott was already moving towards some of its goals.

In reality, Scott had shifted the entire purpose of the newly constructed facility. Philips had been designed as the men’s gymnasium. Before its construction, the men used aging Warner gymnasium while the women operated in the more modern Hales gymnasium. During the design phase, some female faculty members made it clear they were not interested in having space in the new facility except for a locker room so that women could use the new pool.<sup>63</sup>

Philips’ primary function as the men’s athletic facility is obvious upon examination of the floor plans.(See appendix A) One article described the purpose of the new facility:

The most important justification for a new gymnasium at Oberlin rests on purely educational grounds. Oberlin has long concerned itself with the education of what has been termed, ‘...the whole man.’ An important component of such an education is the institution’s physical education, recreation and athletic programs.<sup>64</sup>

This article makes conscious distinction between Oberlin’s athletic commitment to the “whole man” and the “whole student.” This was odd considering Oberlin College had a long history of women’s Physical Education, which included an active intramural program. In this way, Oberlin seemed to be very much like most of the other schools in the United States that built exclusively male athletic facilities. Mr. Scott succeeded in beginning Philips’ transformation into a coeducational facility.

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<sup>62</sup>Sandy Padwe, “Jack Scott--Firm Commitment to Change In Sports,” *The Journal*, March 11, 1973, p. 24. The “little adjustments” Mr. Scott mentioned involved hanging sheets to close off the men’s locker area so that women could have access to the equipment room. (See appendix)

<sup>63</sup>Author’s interview with Fred Shults, Oberlin, Ohio, March 12, 1992. Mr. Shults said that Philips gym was designed so that there would not be sufficient space for the women. Joe Gurtis said that he warned the designers that this exclusion was a mistake.

<sup>64</sup>“Outlook For the Seventies,” Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, 1969-70. Prospectus for Philip’s Gymnasium. OCA.

Mr. Scott initiated other measures to effect gender equity within the department. He had the athletic department brochure revised to reflect the new attitude towards women's athletics. Women's teams rode buses, ate pre-game meals, and gained improved access to facilities. All of these changes prompted one writer to guess that, "Gloria Steinem had been appointed the new A.D.-physical education chairman."<sup>65</sup>

Mr. Scott, his wife Micki and some of the other unpaid faculty volunteers he brought to Oberlin made efforts to awaken the athletic consciousness of Oberlin's female athletes. They orally supported the women's program and criticized the societal forces which worked against female athletes. When interviewed, Mr. Scott would usually mention the improvements in the women's program. He said he considered his major accomplishment at Oberlin, "...seeing the beginning of women's athletic programs and the increasing consciousness willing to fight for that program."<sup>66</sup> Some critics of Scott countered that he focused on women's athletics to improve his own reputation and had little genuine interest.

The atmosphere Mr. Scott and his co-workers initially created was very supportive of the infant women's athletic program. Micki Scott said one of her goals at Oberlin was to, "work with the women in the community and at the college and turn them on to the experience of meeting themselves physically."<sup>67</sup> She said, "in our society, girls are taught that they should never sweat in public, but only concentrate on being beautiful. But, how can they be beautiful when they are not taught the beauty of developing their body through exercise?"<sup>68</sup> Jane Mann, recruited as a volunteer to the department by Mr. Scott, also attacked the status quo:

Women in PE are hung up on femininity...there's this thing about lesbianism. It's changing, but not much. We've been told that it's cute to be a tomboy until were 10, but then we'd better start being ladies. We are discouraged from competition because we may get hurt and because that's not what women are

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<sup>65</sup>Bill Naab, "We haven't taken anything away from men," The Chronicle-Telegram, February 4, 1973. Mary Culhane and Joe Gurtis' Private Files, hereafter referred to as MCPF

<sup>66</sup>"Jack Scott Thaws the Iceberg at OC," The Journal, February 17, 1974. OCA.

<sup>67</sup>Ed Zgonc, "Micki Scott: Oberlin College's Female Sport Nut," The Journal, July 6, 1972, p. 32. MCPF.

<sup>68</sup>"Sports for Profit Challenged by Oberlin," Detroit News, August, 27, 1972. OCA.

here for. It's sexual stereotyping. But, women can enjoy their physical side as well as their mental side.<sup>69</sup>

## Oberlin and the Ohio Athletic Conference

During Scott's stay in Oberlin, the college was a member in the Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC). Since its formation in the early 1902, the OAC had regulated male collegiate sporting events exclusively. At the conference's 1972 Fall meeting, Oberlin College had proposed a change in the conference bylaws which would have allowed women to compete in the OAC. This proposal was "soundly defeated."<sup>70</sup>

During the 1973 Winter-Spring swimming season, Dick Michaels, the Head Coach, had allowed women "on exhibition status" to swim during a January 6th swim meet with the College of Wooster. Robert Bruce, the Athletic Director at Wooster, wrote to Scott that he was, "'quite surprised, and somewhat perturbed' that a woman would swim even exhibition status in a meet."<sup>71</sup> Mr. Bruce made these comments even though Chuck Malta, Wooster's swimming coach, had given his permission for the women to participate in the meet.

On February 23rd, Jack Scott received a letter from A.N. Smith, the OAC commissioner, informing him that an unnamed OAC member had filed a grievance against Oberlin for a violation of Article III rule 1 of the OAC Constitution and Bylaws which read:

...Every bona fide male undergraduate student of a member college is eligible to represent his college in intercollegiate athletic competition in sports controlled by the Conference subject to the provisions of other Rules of eligibility of the Conference.<sup>72</sup>

Scott was requested to appear the conference's convention to answer the allegations. Interestingly, he had been planning on attending to introduce another proposal permitting women to compete in the OAC.

<sup>69</sup>"The Happening at Oberlin," Star & Daily News, October 1, 1972. OCA.

<sup>70</sup>Jay Weiner, "Conference Questions Women Participating," The Oberlin Review, March 2, 1973, pp. 7-8.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. OCA.

<sup>72</sup>Dick Michaels to Women's Athletic Committee. Inter-office memorandum explaining his rationale for using female athletes in OAC events. Dick Michaels Private Files hereafter referred to as DMPF.

Mr. Smith spoke for many of the member schools that thought that Oberlin was attempting to "make a point" by breaking conference rules. Mr. Smith argued that the school should have made an effort to work within the system. "A while ago I'd say they [conference members] were 100 percent against it, but people's mind's are changing."<sup>73</sup> Scott replied that, "We initiated an effort to change the rule in the Fall and it was voted down. Now we're trying again. But in the meantime, we have women students paying tuition and we feel we have a responsibility to see that they have an opportunity to swim."<sup>74</sup> Mr. Bruce's wrote that, "Regardless of how we as individuals may feel, or may have voted recently, about this rule; it still controls competition."<sup>75</sup>

Scott felt that the OAC members were hiding behind this rule to avoid dealing with the underlying issue of coed participation. Coach Michaels cited the case of Charles Walker, a swimmer for Kenyon College, who was ineligible because he had transferred to Kenyon that year. Mr. Walker swam on exhibition status for the school during this period, but no complaints were filed against Kenyon.<sup>76</sup> Considering the apparent double-standard, Mr. Scott thought it was "clear" that someone in the conference was, "uncomfortable about men and women swimming competitively in the same pool, because they didn't go to the Grievance Committee when a man swam exhibition two years ago."<sup>77</sup>

Coach Michaels said that he didn't understand why the women's participation had touched such a raw nerve among OAC members. He explained his motivations behind allowing them to compete, "...were less moralistic and more coachistic [sic]." He continued that he, "didn't view those people as women, they were kids that wanted to participate."<sup>78</sup>

Mr. Michaels was reprimanded by the Conference and told to discontinue using female athletes in OAC sporting events. Michaels, however, ignored the mandate, believing, "the

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<sup>73</sup>Jay Weiner, "Conference Questions Women Participants," The Oberlin Review, March 2, 1973, pp. 7-8.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Author's interview with Dick Michaels, Oberlin, Ohio, March 12, 1992.

rule does not exclude ineligible students, women, transfers, etc..., from participating in exhibition status because they are not representing their college."<sup>79</sup> Michaels felt that it was, "more than inconsistent to disallow women the same right," which Mr. Walker had enjoyed.<sup>80</sup> In correspondence with Mr. Bruce, Coach Michaels pointed out:

If we are breaking any rules, we had better take another look at the rules. They seem to be doing more harm than good. The rules keeping robbing bona fide students of an athletics experience we all hold to be so damn valuable.<sup>81</sup>

In the Fall of 1973, Mr. Michaels again allowed women to participate on exhibition status during a three-school meet with Capital and Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU). The OWU coach approached Michaels and told him that "if we ran women, they wouldn't run us anymore."<sup>82</sup> Michaels then, "presented it [OWU's ultimatum] to our 15-man team and told them of the repercussion involved and they voted unanimously to have the girls run with them, even in the face of an action by the Ohio Conference."<sup>83</sup> Such actions included censuring of the College or possibly expulsion from the Conference. All three teams ran in the meet. Afterwards, OWU filed a grievance against Oberlin, claiming that they had violated Article III Rule 1.

The OAC had legal opinions written which pointed to Oberlin being in violation. Oberlin also had opinions written which supported Michaels' position that the women's ineligibility granted them an exemption. The Oberlin brief included an allusion to Title IX that implied that though the OAC was possibly correct in its literal interpretation of the bylaws, the Federal government backed Oberlin's position.

Mr. Michaels received very strong backing from all sectors in the school. Female athletes began to assert their right to compete as illustrated by the petition distributed by the two runners in question:

We deplore Ohio Wesleyan College athletic director Dr. Robert M. Strimer for filing a grievance with the Ohio Conference.

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<sup>79</sup>Dick Michaels to Women's Athletic Committee.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Jay Weiner, "Conference Questions Women Participants," *The Oberlin Review*, March 2, 1973, pp. 7-8.

<sup>82</sup>"Oberlin women run into trouble with OAC," *The Plain Dealer*, November 27, 1973. OCA.

<sup>83</sup>Author's interview with Dick Michaels.

Women's participation in Ohio Conference sports is not the best solution...Ideally, women's teams should be provided, but until we have women's teams, women must be allowed to participate on existing men's teams. We demand no punitive action be taken against Oberlin College, Oberlin Athletics or Oberlin cross-country coach Dick Michaels for allowing women to participate in cross-country.<sup>84</sup>

Michaels also received support from Scott in this matter, but not until after the meet.<sup>85</sup>

Mr. Scott did not know that women were running on the team. Mike Cleary, the commissioner of the conference, doubted Scott's lack of involvement, noting that Mr. Scott had "advised all his coaches of the rule against women."<sup>86</sup> This indicated only that Scott had made his coaches aware of the Conference rules. Mr. Michaels made a keen observation when he said, "the thing about it is a lot of people associate an act like this with Jack."<sup>87</sup>

When Scott discussed the decision to run women in a men's track meet he made his position clear:

We're excluding 50% of our society. Women. I had 2 women run on an exhibition status in a cross-country meet at Oberlin. You wouldn't believe the hassle. I must have spent 100 hours on the phone and in meetings as a result of it. That's ridiculous.<sup>88</sup>

At the 1974 Spring meeting, the members of the OAC met to discuss possible punitive actions against Oberlin. OWU's Athletic Director, Bob Strimer, explained he understood a school's right to set its own policies about women's participation, but those policies must be made, "with the knowledge that its conference membership is in doubt."<sup>89</sup> Strimer suggested that rather than integrating women into men's intercollegiate athletics, "priority should be given to upgrading separate women's programs so as to make opportunities for women separate but equal." Mr. Strimer cited the "strength factor" which, he said, "would make it difficult for women to compete on an equal basis with men."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>84</sup>"Oberlin women run into trouble with OAC," The Plain Dealer, November 27, 1973. The two runners were Lisa Matovik and Joan Atkins.

<sup>85</sup>"Oberlin women run into trouble with OAC," The Plain Dealer, November, 27, 1973. DMPF.

<sup>86</sup>"Co-eds in harrier race: Oberlin Coach on Carpet," Chicago Sun-Times, November 28, 1973.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Washington Star News, February 24, 1974.

<sup>89</sup>Jim Bauerle, "College-OAC Sexism Showdown due," The Oberlin Review, February 26, 1974, pp. 1,6.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

The OAC censured Coach Michaels, and warned him to cease his coed ways. Coach Michaels again promised to ignore the OAC's directive. Over the following summer, the bylaws were changed removing the word "male" from the rule in question so that it read "student." Though Oberlin's struggle to gain legitimacy for its female athletes was over, the OAC's rephrasing did not mean the conference would govern women's athletics.<sup>91</sup>

### Budgetary Changes Under Scott

When Title IX was enacted in 1972, Oberlin, as well as most of the schools in the country, had an athletic budget that epitomized inequity. When he arrived, Scott published the budget for the 1971-72 academic year. At this point, there were no women's varsity teams. The women's program received a total of \$1,000 out of an overall budget of \$68,000.<sup>92</sup> At a faculty meeting, Scott "strongly criticized the allocation...It was agreed by consensus that the department should overspend on its budget on women's athletics this year."<sup>93</sup>

The subject of funding for the women's program was a regular item on the Physical Education Department's agenda at this point. The growing interest in women's intercollegiate athletics nationally required a greater amount of financial support. Yet, there was resistance to putting more money into the women's program. Most of the female members in the department were of the "old school" mentality and were reluctant recruits into the coaching ranks.<sup>94</sup> This reluctance was obvious in their attitude towards pursuing money for their programs.

An extended discussion of funding for women's sports took place at a departmental meeting on November 10, 1972, that illustrated the faculty member's positions. The Oberlin Student Senate had passed a motion on October 15, calling for increased funding

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<sup>91</sup> Author's interview with Dick Michaels.

<sup>92</sup> "The Rad-Lib Sports Boss," The Plain Dealer, February 4, 1973.

<sup>93</sup> Minutes of the PE Department faculty meeting, November 10, 1972. MCPF.

<sup>94</sup> Author's interview with Fred Shults. Female PE instructors were "made" to coach even if they did not desire to or were ill-prepared to.



that dealt, "more realistically with the athletic needs of the women in Oberlin College."<sup>95</sup>

Yet, the motion met with disdain in the department, rather than the support one might expect from female faculty members during this period:

[Mary] Culhane objected strongly to the October 15 motion of the Oberlin College Student Senate...particularly to the part of the Senate motion stating that last year's allocation of athletic funds to men as compared to women for the current year was \$67,000 vs. only \$1,000. She said that last year when she was coach of the women's basketball team, the team got additional funding from the equipment budget: in particular, the team got tops and shoes, but not uniforms ("because they didn't want them") from the equipment budget.<sup>96</sup>

Mr. Scott pointed out that focusing on small expenditures ignored the larger reality of unequal funding in the department. He claimed that a comparison of total spending, including the salaries for both athletic programs, would show that, "the discrepancy would in fact be much, much greater than \$67,000 - \$1,000"<sup>97</sup> The greater difference was due to the greater number of men's coaches to women's coaches.

Mr. Scott then asked Ms. Culhane, "if this meant that the women's athletic program had been satisfactorily and adequately dealt with in the budget." Ms. Culhane replied "yes."

Culhane's answer seems to contradict the feeling of a portion of the student body which had circulated a petition during October stating:

#### WOMEN ESPECIALLY - PLEASE READ

We the undersigned strongly believe that women's athletics at Oberlin are being discriminated against financially. We ask that the Physical Education Department reconsider its allocations in light of the rising interest on all levels among the women of Oberlin College. The present breakdown which gives women's athletics \$1,000 in comparison with the \$67,000 allocated to the men's program is deplorable.<sup>98</sup>

Three-hundred thirty-six people signed the petition. Yet, some members of the department exhibited a defensive attitude towards the Senate proposal and the petition:

<sup>95</sup>Oberlin College Student Senate, "Resolution on Women's Intercollegiate Athletics," approved on October 15, 1972. OCA.

<sup>96</sup>Minutes of the PE Department faculty meeting, November 10, 1972.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Petition sent to the Office of the Provost. October 26, 1972. OCA.

[Barbara] Calmer strongly supported this [Culhane's position] on the grounds that the women students "got just what they asked for: if they didn't organize themselves, that's just too bad." [Bill] Grice added, "I am tired of looking at these figures that make those of us who were here last year look like a bunch of hypocrites. We have people around the campus that think we are really terrible."

Calmer added that she strongly opposed the Student Senate motion: "They have no right to tell us what to do...If the students (i.e. women athletes) weren't creative in their thinking, that's their fault....I see no reason for airing our dirty laundry in front of students."<sup>99</sup>

Ms. Calmer added that, "as a women's coach, I have never been denied anything I asked for." Mr. Grice replied, "Maybe you didn't ask for enough, but that wasn't our fault."<sup>100</sup> He implied that the funding issue was a "women's problem," unrelated to the men's athletic budget.

Both of these positions paralleled the national trend. The women in the department had yet to develop the level of consciousness that viewed funding as a right and not a privilege. The men were unable to see the problems in women's athletics as one in which they have played a role in creating and, hence, might have a responsibility in rectifying. Rather, they saw women's failure to demand or ask for additional monies as an indication that they lacked interest in an upgraded athletic program. This outlook denied the reality that, historically, women had been discouraged from participating in sports, and, as a result, were slow to develop a sense of propriety about women's funding.

Fred Shults, a professor as well as a coach, suggested a process which might be able to quantify any inequities, as opposed to relying on faculty opinions, which seemed to be biased. He proposed:

...That instead of 'having to fish around for money, the various women's teams should have a budget just like the men's teams. Then we could all see exactly how much or how little was being spent on the women's program...'<sup>101</sup>

Joe Gurtis seconded Shults' motion. Physical Education Professor Sara Houston "disagreed strongly" feeling that it was more important to develop a "philosophy" before

<sup>99</sup>Minutes of the PE Department faculty meeting, November 10, 1972.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

delving into a budget for the women. She cited the need for a "general philosophical discussion." The discourse took a turn when Shults asked Houston, "if she wanted equality of opportunity for women." She replied that, "wasn't the main thing: There are things to discuss. We need a philosophy."<sup>102</sup>

Mr. Grice then stated that there was, "no serious problem in funding women's sports here." He recognized that the program's growing financial needs, but felt that increasing the funding would not be a difficult process. He suggested what was the athletic equivalent of sacrilege to find additional financial support for the women's program. "The football budget should be cut to find the funds," he said.<sup>103</sup> Mr. Scott, who even though he had criticized football, still believed in having a strong program with the right attitude. The following exchange occurred between Scott and Grice:

Scott questioned whether Grice would be feeling this way if he were returning as head football coach next Fall. Grice replied that he'd always known that it was inevitable that the football budget would be cut, and that funding for the women's sports must come from the various men's budgets. He thought that many, if not all, of the existing men's sports programs might have to have budget cuts.<sup>104</sup>

Mr. Grice's suggestions deviated greatly with the responses often given by football coaches and male athletic faculty members around the country at the time. The mere suggestion of cutting the men's sports budget to improve the women's program would cause an athletic director to cringe.

Most athletic directors perceived two ways to fund women's athletic programs. The first, suggested by Mr. Grice, took money out of the men's athletic budgets and allocated it to the women's. This conflicted with the rabidly protective stance male athletic directors had towards men's athletic budgets. The second option involved continuing to increase the men's budget while pumping more money into the women's program. Claiming that there was not enough money available in an institution's budget to fund women's athletics,

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

athletic directors argued that the second option was financially unfeasible. The growth of women's athletic budgets was continually impaired because of rationales such as these.

In the meantime, Scott had been corresponding with Ellsworth Carlson, the College Provost, about the possibility of acquiring more money for the women's athletic program. Mr. Carlson did not have the money available in his contingency funds and had referred the request to Dean Reich. Mr. Carlson agreed that it might be "appropriate" for the school to provide more money but felt that the existing Physical Education Department budget should provide the necessary finding for the women's program:

In other words, if the department has in the past made budget requests with more concern for men than for women, I think the department should bear some responsibility for rectifying a sexist pattern of budgeting. I think it would be too easy for the Provost's office or the Dean's office to carry the full burden of a rectification of the situation.<sup>105</sup>

This response concerned Ms. Calmer who feared where the "rectifying" cuts would be made. She, "insisted that the additional money needed for women's sports should not come from other existing phys ed programs, especially the service programs."<sup>106</sup> Leslie Rudolph, an unofficial volunteer member and coach in the department, asked, "Then where is the money to come from?" Calmer replied: "The coaches must have a meeting and decide. Change can not just come zap, just like that." Calmer also strongly objected to the view that, "The only way women are going to get their cut of the pie is to have absolute parity."<sup>107</sup>

The remaining part of the discussion centered on what the purpose of the women's athletic program should be. This seemed to be very important to some members of the department who felt that any discussion of finances would be premature without having a women's athletic policy. Sara Houston noted that, "the women faculty in the department

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<sup>105</sup>Ellsworth Carlson, Provost, to Jack Scott, October 27, 1972. OCA.

<sup>106</sup>Minutes of the PE Department faculty meeting, November 10, 1972.

In 1973, a letter was sent to members of the EPPC noting the passage of Title IX. It described three apparent inequities in the department. One of points noted the gross discrepancy in the funding of men's and women's sports, even when football was excluded from the calculation. Interestingly, Barbara Calmer, who argued against women's funding in the November 10 meeting, is listed as one of the letter's authors.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid. Parenthesis in original.

much decide among themselves to what extent they wish to participate in coaching intercollegiate athletics and conferences." If they chose not to participate, then they saw little reason to concern themselves with athletic budgets.

Jane Mann, another volunteer staff member recruited by Scott, noted that, "There are a lot of women phys ed faculty in this state who are against women's athletics. (She added that, of course, she didn't mean the women in this department.)"<sup>108</sup> While she claimed not to be accusing any of the female members of the department, Ms. Mann raised an interesting point. Were some members of the "old school" coaching even though it ran contrary to their philosophy and training? Did this outlook affect the efforts they were willing to make on behalf of the student body, especially its women, which was making it increasingly apparent that they desired an improved women's athletic program? Through no fault of their own, the female faculty members were becoming anachronisms in women's intercollegiate athletics, which was increasingly stressing competition along with camaraderie. Barbara Calmer replied to Ms. Mann that, "we aren't just sitting on our duffs doing nothing. We are aware of what's happening in women's athletics."<sup>109</sup> While they were aware, they were not necessarily prepared to be a part of what was happening. The play-days with their relaxed atmospheres were things of the past.

Mr. Scott chose to increase the budget, but exactly by how much he did so is unclear. One newspaper article suggested the increase put the women's budget at \$10,000<sup>110</sup>, another set the figure at \$7,000<sup>111</sup>, while a Sports Illustrated article stated that he, "tripled the funding for women's sports," which would have meant it increased to \$3,000.<sup>112</sup>

## The Trouble With Jack

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>"Oberlin Revolution Lives On," San Jose Mercury News February 3, 1973. OCA.

<sup>111</sup>"Oberlin's Controversial AD Quits in Wake of Presidential Resignation," Chronicle of Higher Education, February 4, 1974. OCA.

<sup>112</sup>Kenny Moore, "The Eye of the Storm," Sports Illustrated, August 8, 1991, volume 75 number 7 p. 60. OCA.

Some questioned if Mr. Scott was willing to take the big plunge into the waters of collegiate athletic reform or if he was just going to dip his toes in. One writer claimed, "since coming to Oberlin, Scott has proved to be more of a methodical reformist than a rapid-change revolutionary."<sup>113</sup>

Ms. Houston, a Physical Education instructor, said that, "Scott's talk of involving women equally with men is somewhat misleading. He wants to advance programs, but isn't mindful of other aspects."<sup>114</sup>

The Hunsinger/Michaels reappointment issue further called Mr. Scott's sincerity about women's athletics into question. He had promised that his first appointment would be a woman. In reality, it turned out to be Tommie Smith, a track star famous for his black power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. The Smith hiring was problematic because he had no master's degree, usually a requirement for a staff member. Anna Ruth Brummet, a member of the Status of Women at Oberlin Committee was, "unhappy at the failure to appoint a women to the position taken by Tommie Smith."<sup>115</sup> She wanted Scott to refrain from appointing more men to the department until, "a more equal balance between male and female faculty is achieved."<sup>116</sup> Mr. Scott claimed he wanted to balance the gender ratio in the faculty, but his actions suggested otherwise.

Scott was a complex man, full of lofty ideas and yet seemingly unsophisticated when it came to implementing them. Fred Shults explained Jack Scott functioned better when criticizing the system from the outside. When he became integrated within the system he had no idea how to work with it and tried to force all that disagreed with him out. He was unable to work within the administrative structure and became easily frustrated. His frustration led him to employ questionable methods, including threats and unfounded charges of racism, to achieve his goals.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>"'Sports for Profit' Challenged by Oberlin," Detroit News, August 27, 1972.

<sup>114</sup>Bill Naab, "Scott, You're fine, but...", Chronicle-Telegram, April 29, 1973, p. B-1,2. MCPF.

<sup>115</sup>Annahapter " Ruth Brummet to Jack Scott April 18, 1972. OCA.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Author's interview with Fred Shults.

Mr. Scott held both the positions of Chairman and AD. Once criticism of Mr. Scott began, the EPPC suggested that it would be best if he stepped down from one. He was criticized for not doing enough for women's sports:

...the women's athletic committee [WAC] (which he must sometime regard as a monster of his own creation) pressed for a woman to occupy a prominent position in the department. Even though Scott fashioned himself a champion of women's rights, the WAC reasoned it needed a woman in power to increase participation of females more fully.<sup>118</sup>

This article was telling for two points. Terming the WAC a "monster" illustrates the lack of seriousness with which some people viewed women's athletics. Second, the WAC's call for a strong female leader within the department was important. A student member of the WAC said Scott thought he had, "all the solutions. But, I don't think he understands the underlying problems. He sees women in relation to the class struggle...The issues, though are different than just class struggle ones."<sup>119</sup> According to one writer:

The women athletes are seeking an identity. Scott hasn't been able to gratify that need. A female athlete must be defined. The women want to realize how to express themselves as individuals and as a department. Models need to be established to follow. 'We don't want to mimic the men's physical education department,' remarked Loey Powell, a student member of the WAC. 'They've made too many mistakes.'<sup>120</sup>

Ms. Powell's comment paralleled the rationale behind the formation of the AIAW that chose not to follow the male model of athletics because they saw it as an extremely flawed system. The WAC felt that Scott didn't, "have an idea of what a women's physical education department should be."<sup>121</sup> They felt he was fine as a men's AD, but that by hiring a woman, who would be Scott's counterpart for women's athletics, their program could be improved.

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<sup>118</sup>Chronicle-Telegram, October 10, 1973.

<sup>119</sup>Bill Naab, "Scott, You're fine, but..." Chronicle-Telegram, April 29, 1973, p. B-1,2.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

The female faculty members at the time frustrated the female members. The young women in the department, such as Ms. Mann and Ms. Rudolph were all temporary non-paid appointments. Ms. Mann was popular with the students because, "it's hard to see through Scott's rhetoric," but, "Jane was always aware of who was pulling the strings and really brought us into things. She got us thinking about what we could do."<sup>122</sup> The older members, "just don't have it," according to one student, and hence were poor role models for the emerging female athletes. "Since Scott has been unable to pressure the old guard off the staff, he has simply told the WAC to retrain them as coaches." This irked the WAC who felt Scott treated the coaching problem as "their hassle" They explained that retraining was "like trying to teach yourself physics."<sup>123</sup>

Soon criticism of Scott was everywhere. Some students circulated a petition signed by 216 physical education majors, members of intercollegiate teams, and other students who charged that Scott, "was unethical in getting some teachers to resign, stressed competitive sports over classroom activities, and failed to implement programs he said publicly he would carry out." Scott claimed the petitions were "the work of a few troublemakers."<sup>124</sup>

In the 1973 EPPC review of the department, Dean Reich wrote a scathing criticism of Scott's management of the athletic department and of the women's programs. Suggestions for Scott's dismissal began to circulate at this point. Dean Reich had supported Scott early on in his early days, but it became apparent to him that there were some serious problems in the department. One such instance that concerned Reich involved the women's tennis team:

He has submitted a report indicating that the performance of the tenured faculty is the poorest he has seen. In this report, he indicated that the women's tennis team had rejected one of the tenured members as its coach even though this tenured member claimed strong competency in this area. Based on that, the women's tennis team is now being coached by a town woman, even though there is a faculty member available. Upon investigation by the EPPC subcommittee, it turned out that the women's tennis team not only had never rejected the faculty

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Newsday May 13, 1973.



member in question, but had never known that she was assigned to the job of coaching. It seems that if a chairman is going to make such a direct shot at a colleague, a slur that downgrades the competency of that colleague in the eyes of anyone hearing or seeing it, that the information on which the attack is based must be correct. To slander or rumor alone is an untenable act in any circumstances.<sup>125</sup>

Scott felt that the study had been initiated much too soon after the assumption of his post. He claimed the EPPC's zealousness revealed flaws in the department that were to expected during a transition period. He thought that this made the department seem worse since it was in a time of transition.<sup>126</sup> His replies to the EPPC report are very interesting. When the report noted that:

...some feel that the time has come for a more substantial attempt at balancing the men's and women's programs. This line of argument generally assumes that if no more funds are available from the college for varsity athletics, more money can be assigned to the women's program by cutting some of the "unessentials" from the men's program, such as team banquets, letter jackets, etc. People who hold this view are eager to point out they support a strong men's program, but feel that a strong commitment to a woman's program is both timely and necessary, and that cutting the aforementioned "unessentials" would merely be trimming the fat from one aspect of the total program so that another aspect could flourish.<sup>127</sup>

Mr. Scott agreed, "that any unnecessary expenditures should be re-allocated to the women's intercollegiate budget." However, he noted that, "the budgetary cuts from the men's program won't pay the projected 'needed' \$30,000 budget for women."<sup>128</sup> He turned the responsibility back to the administration by questioning:

<sup>125</sup>"Departmental Review of Physical Education: Subcommittee report as amended and adopted by EPPC," May 22, 1973. p. 16. There appears to have been many attempts on Scott's part to intimidate or threaten those who did not subscribe to his ideas into leaving. It was fairly common for Scott to threaten a faculty member with the loss of their job and on occasion with bodily harm. Furthermore, Scott and Sara Houston disagreed regularly. Scott forced her to move from her office in Hales to Philips and then "relented" and permitted her to return to Hales. He would call Houston at late at night even though she was in poor health. OCA.

<sup>126</sup>Cynthia Elek, "EPPC evaluation scores Scott & company." *The Oberlin Review*, September 11, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup>"EPPC Report," p. 13. The use of the words "timely" and "necessary" seem to be references to the requirements of Title IX. It should be noted that this viewpoint had its opponents: "Some varsity male athletes felt that the very 'unessentials' mentioned were ones that contributed to team solidarity and camaraderie. Camaraderie and fellowship are, after all, among the chief rewards for participation in team sports, say these respondents, and although they acknowledge the inequity, they feel that the money for a women's varsity program should come from another source."

<sup>128</sup>Jack Scott, "Departmental Response to EPPC report," November 26, 1973. OCA.

Does the college truly have a commitment to provide women with equal opportunity to participate in intercollegiate athletics. If so, where is the money going to come from?<sup>129</sup>

Departmental events during Mr. Scott's chairmanship further undermined his supposed support of women's athletics. One of the more graphic incidents occurred in 1973. Buster Donaldson, the equipment room manager of the time had a brief correspondence with Holly Sklar, a student on the Women's Athletic Committee (WAC). (See Appendix B) Mr. Donaldson had ordered purple bikinis for the women to use. She pointed out that this was both insulting and impractical.<sup>130</sup> He wrote back an expletive laden letter, basically explaining that the only reason a woman would wear a swimsuit would be to show off their body, and not to exercise.<sup>131</sup>

Ms. Sklar explained that Mr. Scott's attitude was very different from the first year to the second. After the first year, he felt that he had to choose between supporting black male athletes or female athletes. By the second year, it became apparent to some women the Mr. Scott had focused much of his efforts on improving the welfare of male athletes, specifically black men.<sup>132</sup> "Feminism, they feel, has taken a back seat to racial concerns."<sup>133</sup> This feeling created conflict between the two groups, who competed for limited funds.

Ms. Sklar said her conflict with Mr. Donaldson was a good example of the atmosphere Scott fostered in the department during the second year. Mr. Donaldson came out of the affair relatively unscathed. She felt pitting race against gender was unreasonable, and polarized the department.

There was often a difference between Mr. Scott's words and his actions. His vocal support of women's athletics was contrary to other athletic directors who abstained from promoting women's athletics assuming such an emphasis would have on men's athletics.

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Holly Sklar to Buster Donaldson, Oberlin, Ohio. OCA.

<sup>131</sup>Buster Donaldson to Holly Sklar, Oberlin, Ohio

<sup>132</sup>Bill Naab, "Women and Blacks divided into opposing groups," The Chronicle-Telegram, April 29, 1973.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

His actions such as increasing the budget, and giving the women new lockers, and supporting the female cross-country runner all were very progressive steps in a field that was very slow to change.

There were major questions about Scott's sincerity. It seems that he was willing to support women's athletics as long as the decisions were his to make. Additionally, many of his administrative acts did not affirm his stated position on women's athletics. This was not unusual for most Athletic Directors after the passage of Title IX. As a self-proclaimed radical sports administrator, it was unusual that Jack Scott made many of the same policy decisions found in mainstream athletic administration.

President Fuller announced his resignation, effective on February 2, 1974, in the late fall of 1973. He had been one of Mr. Scott's strongest supporters. His departure enabled Mr. Scott's critics to push for termination of his employment. The department favored firing Mr. Scott, but the College was reluctant to pursue that option, considering Mr. Scott's litigious history. The college paid Mr. Scott \$42,000, an amount equivalent to the remainder of his contract, to resign at the end of January 1974.<sup>134</sup> This amount was nearly six times the entire budget that he had allocated for women's athletics.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Carol Matlack, "Scott dismissal compelled," The Oberlin Review, February 5, 1974, p. 1. Tommie Smith and Cass Jackson were given three-year extensions as part of the "deal" to get Jack Scott to resign.

<sup>135</sup>This number could possibly be as large as fourteen times the women's budget.

## Chapter IV:

### P.S. Post-Scott, Claudia Coville's Role in the Evolution of Women's Athletics at Oberlin

Following Jack Scott's resignation, Oberlin's Physical Education staff began to sort through the rubble of a fractured department, and attempted to put the pieces back in place. But, by 1975, most of the pieces no longer fit. Many of the issues that had been divisive rallying points for Scott were still in need of attention. These issues were caught between two contradictory forces created by Scott's departure. On one side was a reactionary, almost "conservative" mood that had developed because of the trauma wreaked by Mr. Scott's "radical" administrative policies.<sup>136</sup> The other side consisted of department members who shared some of Mr. Scott's ideas, but did not care for his methods of implementation. Scott's absence made it possible for them to focus on the issues, especially women's sports, without his presence tainting the discussion and its outcome.

The future of the women's athletic program was central in determining new alignments. The surge in interest in women's athletics nationally and Mr. Scott's efforts at encouraging its development at Oberlin resulted in a growing number of women participating in the program. Additionally, women continued to develop a more serious attitude towards their athletic endeavors. Confronted with this reality, many of the "old guard" who had railed against the increased competitiveness of women's athletics at Oberlin grudgingly began to accede to the students' desires.<sup>137</sup>

In 1973, the course catalog listed eight women's varsity teams in basketball, field hockey, volleyball, lacrosse, swimming, tennis, synchronized swimming and cross-country. Yet, the department's faculty observed realistically that they had, "no means for carrying them out."<sup>138</sup> Most of the female faculty members had little if any training in

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<sup>136</sup> Author's interview with Fred Shults.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Notes from a meeting between Dean Longworth and Physical Education faculty members Pat Penn, Claudia Coville, and Joe Gurtis. January 26, 1975. Author unknown.

competitive coaching. Besides being unprepared to coach, most of these women were uninterested, seeing coaching as contrary to their ideologies on women's Physical Education.

Two women in the department recognized the developing interest in women's athletics and assisted the program's evolution from its infancy. These women, Claudia Coville and Mary Culhane, were unlike the other female faculty members in the department because they were able to modify or discard the traditional attitudes about women and athletics inherent in their own training and education. They were transitional figures, inexperienced in the world of competitive women's athletics, but aware of the changes taking place and willing to support their development.

On January 26, 1975, almost a year after Scott's resignation, Dean Robert Longworth met with Pat Penn, the Department Chairman, Joe Gurtis and Claudia Coville, the Athletic Directors for men's and women's athletics, to discuss the future of the department. They discussed a range of issues. How much money should be pumped into the women's program? Where should this money come from? And who was going to coach these teams?<sup>139</sup>

During the meeting, they identified possible options for improving the quality of the women's program. They faced a situation in which the male members of the faculty were already responsible for the coaching of the men's teams, while the female faculty taught the academic major and the activity classes.<sup>140</sup> One suggestion involved retraining all the faculty members, "especially the women." Since retraining would effectively undercut each member's area of expertise, the administrators thought that this was impractical. Training a kinesiologist as a coach would not necessarily have negative effect on their teaching ability, but it seemed to negate the reason for which they were hired.

Another option was for the department to hire additional staff members to coach the teams. This was the optimal choice since it would have provided trained coaches for the

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Tom Nutile, "PE department reorganization: leadership and belt tightening," The Oberlin Review, May 21, 1976.

women's teams. It was also the least realistic option for multiple reasons. During the mid-1970s the College entered a period of budgetary restraints and cuts, and enacted a faculty freeze. Since the Physical Education Department was already one of the larger departments on campus, gaining additional faculty slots unlikely.

The final suggestion was that the academic major be dropped. This move would result in a reduced course load for the instructors who could then focus more time on coaching. But, abolishing the major would not change the female faculty members who were Physical Education professors into athletic coaches.<sup>141</sup>

The department, in consultation with the administration, eventually chose to train the existing women's faculty. There were three outcomes, predominantly negative, from this decision. First, regardless of the fact that some of the women on the faculty such as Barbara Calmer had no interest in coaching a team, they were assigned the responsibility anyway. Ms. Calmer was "designated" as the women's swimming and tennis coach.<sup>142</sup> Second, the retraining decision also ensured that most of the women's teams at Oberlin would receive sub-standard coaching, until it was possible to hire replacements. The third and final part of this decision, though not directly linked to the women's coaching issue, still affected the women's faculty. Mr. Penn announced, as a result of streamlining, the number of academic classes to be offered in the following year would be reduced from 23 to nine. This reduction increased the time which would be spent on coaching, while simultaneously reducing the time spent teaching, the primary skill of the female staff members.<sup>143</sup>

### Claudia Coville, Oberlin's First Women's Athletic Director

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<sup>141</sup>Peggy Dorf, "PE sports new outlook," The Oberlin Review, May 12, 1976.

<sup>142</sup>Author's phone interview with Judith Flohr. March 26, 1992. She is currently a professor of Physical Education at James Madison University.

<sup>143</sup>Peggy Dorf, "PE sports new outlook," The Oberlin Review, May 12, 1976.

The second half of the decade brought with it the growth and development of Oberlin's women's athletic program, however inadequately coached, but also witnessed the decline of the Physical Education major.

Central to this new configuration was Claudia Coville, hired in October of 1973 by Jack Scott as the athletic coordinator of the recently reorganized women's athletic program. Ms. Coville's, "major role in this reorganization became that of mediator between the women on the Physical Education faculty who had liked the club system and the women athletes who favored immediate changes towards a varsity organization resembling the men's teams."<sup>144</sup> Later, her position was renamed and she became the first women's athletic director, supposedly putting her on an equal level with the men's athletic director. Under her leadership, the program began to evolve as illustrated in the content of the annual reports for the women's athletic program that she initiated in 1976.

Ms. Coville favored the gradual development of a strong women's athletic program. She had to balance the students' desire for rapid change against the attitude and capabilities of a faculty that had conservative views on women's athletics. Her gradualist sentiment is obvious in the general comments of her annual report for the 1976-77 athletic year. She outlined what her goals for the program had been during the past year:

...to better the efficiency of running the program, and to improve the administrative organization. These goals were reasonably met. In a time of long range planning and decisions, stabilization of the existing level seemed more important than increasing of the program.<sup>145</sup>

She recognized the under-development of the women's program compared to the men's, yet she emphasized that, "for all that is lacking, Oberlin's program is in the forefront in a few ways."<sup>146</sup> She mentioned the organization of Women's Athletic Committee (WAC) which remained only "a possibility" at other schools, the innovation of

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<sup>144</sup>Susan Cohen, "Claudia Coville: Five for the price of one?" *The Oberlin Review*, March 9, 1977.

<sup>145</sup>Claudia Coville, "Report on the Women's Athletic Program 1976-77," p. 1. Pat Milkovich's Private Files hereafter referred to as PMPF.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

fielding a coed cross-country team, the prime time exposure of the women's basketball team that travelled with the men's for games at Baldwin-Wallace College.<sup>147</sup>

Her report noted, "Title IX was not an issue, for the first year," while nonetheless reporting:

...training room personnel and facilities were not equitably shared between the men and women. Too often the Head Trainer and assistants were giving time to the men while neglecting to cover the women's sports...Men's contact sports obviously need trainers, but women's sports did not receive training attention adequate to their needs.<sup>148</sup>

Equitable use of medical and training facilities and services is one area covered by Title IX. Ms. Coville either was unaware that Title IX applied to this situation or she did not think it merited a complaint. Perhaps in her penchant for a rational progression in the women's program she wished instead to stress the, "good atmosphere of athletes and coaches understanding the limitations within the program, and working within these."<sup>149</sup>

Ms. Coville was, however, concerned with the budget. The amount allocated to the eight women's teams had been increasing since the 1973-74 season when the women had only \$7,000.<sup>150</sup> The next year, their budget increased to \$15,000, and during the 1975-76 season another increase raised funding to \$17,340, an amount just over 1/4 of the corresponding men's budget. <sup>151</sup> "The decision had to be made whether or not to meet the now established costs of the program."<sup>152</sup> However, the budget was still not balanced and Ms. Coville realized that to achieve her goal of stability, "long range commitment decisions

<sup>147</sup>Ibid p. 2. "The prime time," refers to the later starting time during a double-header. The first game usually is played in the early evening, and hence a less desirable starting slot. In most coed double-headers it was the norm that the women's team would receive the earlier starting time.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Peggy Dorf, "Administrative mess: OC women's athletics," The Oberlin Review, May 12, 1976. The men's budget was reported to be \$62,000.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid. For comparison's sake the football team received \$20,000 (from outside funding) to field a 16 person team in 1975. Tom Nutile, "Footballers survive the season," The Oberlin Review, May 21, 1976.; The men's basketball team had received \$9,050 versus \$1,650 for the women. Funding discrepancies in other sports were explained due to the higher equipment costs for men's sports compared to women's "gentler" sports (e.g. lacrosse). However, basketball has little or no difference between the genders in terms of its physicality. Coach Pat Penn explained that the difference was attributable to the fact that the men wore out more pairs of shoes per season than the women and the costs of playing an OAC conference schedule. Peggy Dorf, "Athletic budget: Who gets what and why," The Oberlin Review, September 7, 1976, p. 12.

<sup>152</sup>Coville, "Report," p. 2.



must be made." The 1976-77 increase of 5.5% on across-the-board, cost-of-living granted to all departments seemed still too small, and she feared it would inhibit the growth of the women's program.<sup>153</sup>

When discussing recruiting, Ms. Coville again indicated an uncertainty about the college's backing of the program. "Much development in this area [recruiting] is needed. Of course, until the college decides whether or not to support the program more fully, any coach would be hesitant to recruit an athlete to a questionable program."<sup>154</sup> Later she was more forthright in her musings:

Of great concern for many athletes within the college and members of the Physical Education Department is the standing of the program within the College. This year the question was: "will the program be cut or developed?" A definite sign is needed from the College Administration as to whether the program, now out of fledgling growth, is to be a viable part of the college, or whether the total Athletic Program, including the women's, is to be scaled down....Does the College really want this program? Is Oberlin committed to the development of Women's Sports?...Will necessary budgetary considerations be given to Women's Athletics? These are questions which if not answered and acted upon will be severe problems in the future program.<sup>155</sup>

In her projected outlook for 1977-78, Ms. Coville outlined the ramifications of any decision about the women's athletic program:

The program has reached a stage at which it must either grow or lose vitality. If the direction is one of fewer, more competitive, sports, this choice will contradict the Oberlin Athletic Policy of opportunity of many. If, on the other hand, the decision is made to offer many sports, less competitive due to the lack of coaching staff and budget, Oberlin's standard of excellence will suffer...Attention must be given to promote the acceptance of, and participation in, athletics in the student body. A positive and firm commitment by the Administration will greatly assist this...As Director of this program for four years, I have seen one inherent and continual challenge. Oberlin women students for the most part are high achievers. They see themselves as capable of reaching the highest levels, whether if be in academics or athletics. They demand programming which will have the organization, finances, facilities and coaching staff to allow them to achieve the highest level possible. The present

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<sup>153</sup>p. Dorf, "Athletic Budget: Who gets what and why," The Oberlin Review, September 7, 1976.

<sup>154</sup>Coville, "Report," p. 2.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid. p. 3.

program has not been allowed to develop to meet these demands. The women athletes were quiet this year, but I project growing dissatisfaction if the program is not substantially developed. It is wonderful to have such motivated women athletes. They have been a constant positive thrust to the programs development thus far. Development of the program is of paramount importance to keeping these motivated women athletes.<sup>156</sup>

Ms. Coville had worked extremely hard to improve the quality of women's athletics at Oberlin, but she saw much of her work jeopardized by the College's inactivity. The lack of response was due, in part, to the lean fiscal times the school was experiencing, but there is no indication this was ever communicated to Ms. Coville, nor did the College indicate a desire to remedy its history of inequality in women's sports.

On March 16, 1976, The Oberlin Review reported that Oberlin College was conducting a self-evaluation to determine if it was in compliance with Title IX. Elizabeth Hayford, the Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College's Title IX officer, was in charge of overseeing the review. She described the Physical Education Department as, "potentially, a problem." Specifically, she cited the discrepancy in the number of lockers for men and for women in Philips Gymnasium as a possible violation.<sup>157</sup>

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) had issued its regulations for Title IX compliance the previous year. While they were vague, they did outline 13 areas in athletic programs to which Title IX applied. Even allowing for the unclear nature of the regulations, it would seem that Oberlin was obviously in violation of Title IX due to the gross imbalance in locker room allotments in Philips. Yet, Ms. Hayford maintained that, "an equitable solution has been reached, whereby men and women go under the same guidelines for obtaining locker space." She did admit that, "the facilities are more crowded for women, however."<sup>158</sup> Nothing had been done to change the balance of lockers since Mr. Scott turned the faculty locker room into a women's room. Excluding

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<sup>156</sup>Ibid. pp. 3-4.

<sup>157</sup>Claudia Silverman, "College policies reviewed for Title IX violations," The Oberlin Review, March 16, 1976.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

retrofitting Philips, switching the locker rooms or making them coed, how an "equitable solution" rectified an almost 2:1 ratio of men's lockers to female lockers when the student body ratio was closer to 1:1, in favor of women, was not explained.<sup>159</sup>

The end of 1976 did not portend a happy new year. Ms. Coville resigned her position, effective in June of 1977, to pursue her doctorate. At the same time the EPPC (Educational Plans and Policies Committee) announced its rankings for position allocations. The Physical Education Department was ranked eighth out of twelve departments, with only the top four receiving slots. This meant that the department would not retain Ms. Coville's slot, leaving the department with only three female faculty members. The remaining female Physical Education faculty feared further cuts in the major or the trimming of women's sports.

Mary Culhane assumed the women's athletic directorship in the summer of 1977 and continued to try to create a program that met the needs of the student body.<sup>160</sup> Ms. Culhane was a step closer to the type of administrator and coach for which the women's teams had been asking. While her education would qualify her as a member of the "old school," her foresight enabled her to overcome many of the obstacles this may have presented.

During a leave of absence from the College in 1966, Ms. Culhane travelled to California. Sensing the changes that were reshaping the way in which women perceived athletics, she played basketball and volleyball in city leagues to have, "a little competition to find out what it was like."<sup>161</sup> She described feeling a "push" by younger women for more competitive athletic opportunities. Ms. Culhane highlighted the significance of volleyball in the 1968 Olympics as a confirmation of the onset of a new age in women's athletics. These

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<sup>159</sup>Ibid. Joe Gurtis wrote a paper entitled "Athletics" assessing the department. Many of the sections seem to be an analysis of the department regarding Title IX. According to him "Our one large inequity or sex discrimination appears in the area of locker rooms." (p. 4, Section G). Adding up the locker rooms available in Hales Gymnasium, Philips Gymnasium, and the Jones Field House he approximated that there were 1900 lockers for men and 900 for women. A 2:1 ratio. He did point out that the women had more lockers in Hales than the men. PMPF.

<sup>160</sup>Mary Culhane had been at various points; the swimming coach, the track and field coach, the synchronized swimming coach, the basketball coach and most recently the volleyball coach. She retired in 1988.

<sup>161</sup>Author's interview with Mary Culhane.

experiences motivated her to seek training as a coach so that she was “ready” to function in this new environment.<sup>162</sup>

Under Ms. Culhane and Ms. Coville’s leadership the women’s athletic program at Oberlin College had achieved a measure of success. In 1978, the women’s cross-country team had individual meets separate from the men’s for the first time. While the Office for Civil Rights had mandated Title IX compliance by that year, an article in The Oberlin Review explained the cross-country team’s new schedule simply as the result of feasibility.<sup>163</sup>

Title IX existed as a subtle, yet strong, influence on collegiate athletics. More women’s teams were available with which to compete because many schools had developed women’s programs as Oberlin had. The question that remained nationally and at Oberlin, was accurately phrased by Ms. Coville when she asked, “Is Oberlin committed to the development of Women’s Sports?”<sup>164</sup>

Other pressing issues in the department confounded the answer to this question. A decision on the future of the major and the football team in the upcoming years would have a direct impact on the development of women’s athletics. The College saw the need to address these three areas that played such a major role in the Physical Education Department. In 1977 to 1978, President Emil Danenberg commissioned an Ad Hoc Committee to assist the department in plotting out its future and answering the many questions dogging it.

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<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup>Andy Long, “K. Fowler: Setting her own model,” The Oberlin Review, May 3, 1977, p.6.

<sup>164</sup>Coville, “Report,” p. 2.

## Chapter V:

### The 1977 Ad Hoc Committee on Athletic Policy, Football, the Physical Education Major and Their Impact on the Future of Women's Athletics at Oberlin

PE members have been operating under a cloud of not knowing what was going to happen to their department. Do we really want a football team; are our programs serving a majority of people on campus? There was a general feeling that we should have some answers instead of continually wondering.<sup>165</sup>

-Robert Haslun, Assistant to the President, commenting on the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Athletic Policy.

A reduced budget and a depleted staff limited the Physical Education Department's ability to maintain the same quality in academics, intramurals, activity classes, and intercollegiate athletics as it had provided in the past. The department was suffering as a result of the struggle to meet these standards. According to James Powell, the College Provost, the struggle was complicated by the fact that, "there's never been a common definition of what was important."<sup>166</sup> Realizing the department was functioning according to an outdated set of guidelines, President Emil Danenberg formed an Ad Hoc Committee in May of 1977 to study the Physical Education Department.

Professor Geoffrey Blodgett was appointed chairman of the ten-person committee.<sup>167</sup> They met in the Fall, examining certain aspects of the department, specifically the troubled football team, physical education major and women's athletics program.<sup>168</sup> Mr. Blodgett described the difficulty of the situation: "We embarked on our task aware not only that the

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<sup>165</sup>Josh Levin, "Ad hoc committee to review PE policies," The Oberlin Review, Commencement 1977, p. 1.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

<sup>167</sup>Geoffrey Blodgett, "PRESIDENT'S AD HOC COMMITTEE TO STUDY ATHLETIC POLICY, FINAL REPORT," January 10, 1978, Oberlin, Ohio, cover page. Other members of the committee were: Betty Christianson, Norman Craig, Kathleen Crowe, Edward DeVol, Drew Eginton, Albert McQueen, Daniel Merrill, Edward Miller, and James White. OCA.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid, p.1. The five areas, "meriting intensive scrutiny," identified by the committee were: The Department's academic program and the Physical Education major, the intercollegiate football program, the women's sports program, Departmental staffing, procedures and professional development, the departmental budget and use of facilities.

department faced serious problems, but was internally divided as to how best to cope with them."<sup>169</sup>

Football proved to be one of the more volatile issues with important implications for the department as a whole and women's athletics in particular. The football program demanded the greatest amount of funding and coaching of any sport offered in the department. One strong constituency favored maintaining football while another influential constituency proposed abolishing it. The question of whether Oberlin College should field a football team was not new. In 1969, the possibility of dropping the team had arisen due to recruiting difficulties and the team's mediocre performance.<sup>170</sup> Yet, alumni rallied to its aid and the program was saved. In 1975, the team was nearly dropped when the administration slashed \$15,000 from the department's budget. At this point, the team had only 16 players and losing games by lopsided scores was not unusual.<sup>171</sup> The alumni again saved the program and raised enough money to finance the team's \$20,000 budget. This amount represented more than the entire women's budget that served 129 women.<sup>172</sup>

The women's athletic program was another central issue. Mr. Blodgett wrote that the committee would attempt to, "define a proper and adequate role for women's athletics." But, given the volatility of the issue, what he meant by a proper and adequate role was not clear. He recognized that the expansion of women's athletics, which appeared unavoidable, would mean sacrifice elsewhere.<sup>173</sup>

The future of the major was controversial since the needs of these three programs were viewed as competing for limited funds. A note summarizing the positions on football

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<sup>169</sup>Ibid, p.2. The committee was supplied with the 1969 visiting committee report, the 1970 Frank Committee report on football, Dean Reich's 1972 report on the Department, and the 1973 EPPC departmental review. In addition, Mr. Powell sent out questionnaires to eight comparable colleges concerning their physical education and athletic programs to assist the committee.

<sup>170</sup>"Certain Aspects of Intercollegiate Football at Oberlin: A report," 1970.

<sup>171</sup>Tom Nutile, "Footballers survive the season," The Oberlin Review, May 21, 1976. p. 6b. Even with only 16 players, the team finished 2-4.; Doug Learner, "So quickly the tide turns," The Oberlin Review, October 4, 1977. The Yeomen lost to Carnegie-Mellon 55-6.; Steve Clymer, "Gridders lose ground, 55-0," The Oberlin Review, September 26, 1976. The Yeomen lost to Hiram College.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid. Peggy Dorf, "Athletic Budget: Who gets what and why," The Oberlin Review, September 7, 1976, p. 12. The women's budget was reported to be 17,340 for the 1975-76 season. This meant that an average of \$134.41 was spent on each female athlete compared to \$1250 spent on each football player.

<sup>173</sup>Geoffrey Blodgett, "Tasks of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Athletic Policy," September 1977. OCA.

illustrated the problem succinctly: "Main arguments ag. [football]: cost; competing priorities (women's sports)."<sup>174</sup>

Four groups within the department submitted papers stating their opinions about what the priorities of the department should be in the four general areas of intercollegiate sports, intramurals, activity classes, and Physical Education classes. A paper submitted by Ruth Brunner, Judith Flohr and Jan Wignall indicated their growing awareness that a women's athletic program was a right and not a privilege. They compared the men's and women's programs, recognized the disparities and were no longer willing to accept them:

The women's program needs to be strengthened by additional coaches. At present there are only four coaches for seven sports; (It is an interesting observation when looking at the entire women's intercollegiate budget is less than football's alone and that without football, their budget is only approximately 2/5 of the remainder of the men's sports. So it would be inconceivable to cut women's athletics on moral as well as legal grounds.)<sup>175</sup>

Their point is interesting for two reasons. First, the allusion to Title IX is unmistakable. It suggested, for the first time, a willingness to employ the law to buttress the claims of women's athletics. Second, their focus on intercollegiate athletics and not the major signaled that women's athletics was taking on a greater degree of importance to the women's faculty members.

On October 18, 1977, the Ad Hoc Committee held open meetings to elicit students' feelings on the Physical Education Department.<sup>176</sup> Many of the comments that the committee received were not new. One student said, "she would not have come [to Oberlin] without an extensive women's program, though because of coaching problems it looks better on paper than it really is."<sup>177</sup> These sentiments were echoed by Lauren Jackson, a student invited to talk with the committee: "Coaching for women's sports is not

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<sup>174</sup>Unidentified typewritten note in Ad Hoc Committee file. OCA.

<sup>175</sup>R. Brunner, J. Wignall, and J. Flohr, "Position Paper on the Future of the PE Department," September 1977. Parenthesis in original. OCA.

<sup>176</sup>Blodgett, p. 2. The committee also met with the members of the 1977 football team. This was the only team which the report notes the committee as having met with.

<sup>177</sup>"Minutes of the Open Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee To Study Athletic Policy," October 18, 1977. OCA.

adequate. We live with it, we don't learn or progress, we don't grow. [The] coaches can't get the best results from their teams."<sup>178</sup>

The Committee's report, submitted on Jan 10, 1978, prefaced by the following statement recognizing the contingency of the positions they took and the impact of this uncertainty:

Our recommendations are made on the assumptions that a full restoration of FTE cuts and a major expansion of the department's budget to cover adequately all its current responsibilities are not realistic options for the foreseeable future. Within the constraints established by that assumption, our committee found itself divided at crucial points along lines roughly analogous to the division within the department.<sup>179</sup>

They made four recommendations. The committee split 5-5 on the football issue and as a result presented two separate reports. The recommendations concerning the women's department were straightforward, yet their viability depended, to a large degree, on the other two issues.

The report made six recommendations for women's athletics, beginning with a statement of purpose for the program itself:

WE BELIEVE THAT THE P.E. DEPARTMENT AND OBERLIN COLLEGE SHOULD MAKE A COMMITMENT TO A HEALTHY AND RESPECTED PROGRAM IN WOMEN'S ATHLETICS BY PROVIDING WELL-COACHED TEAMS IN THE SPORTS THAT ARE OFFERED, SUPPORTING THE RECRUITMENT OF SCHOLAR-ATHLETES, AND CONTINUING TO HOST STATE AND NATIONAL COMPETITIONS.<sup>180</sup>

The other recommendations were specific means to attaining this goal. The committee recognized the need for better coaching and suggested experimenting with non-tenureable three-year positions to alleviate some of the coaching problems. They also suggested continuation of the junior varsity programs, the reopening of Hales Gymnasium to reduce the overcrowding that existed in Philips, and a budgetary increase for team needs.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid.

<sup>179</sup>Blodgett, p. 2.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid, P.11. #12. Capitalization in original.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid, p. 12, #13-17.



The Committee suggested that the academic portion of the department be de-emphasized. Although not directly proposing to drop the major, this suggested its ultimate demise.<sup>182</sup> Some faculty members, in and out of the department, worried about losing a long-standing part of the College. Oberlin had been a pioneer in the field and the program was still highly regarded in academic circles. When Judith Flohr was hired in 1977, her colleagues congratulated her on getting a job at, "the physical education capital of the Midwest."<sup>183</sup>

The report's greater emphasis on athletics also troubled many faculty members who thought this flew in the face of Oberlin's classic policy of providing the opportunity for participation. The philosophy of the department was undergoing a radical shift away from what a writer in The Oberlin Review, "extensive athletics to a policy of intensive athletics....As a result, the student who wants to go out for a team merely because he enjoys the sport, will no longer be allowed to participate, since he is not good enough. Is this [a "high-powered" intercollegiate athletic program] what Oberlin College wants?"<sup>184</sup>

Central to this issue was the role of football. The team had been mediocre at best since the late 1960s. It was continually undermanned against larger conference teams boasting well over fifty players. Finally, fielding a football team is an expensive commitment. Oberlin's team cost about \$20,000, an amount that would be highly beneficial if spread amongst the remaining teams.

However, it was not merely the balance sheets that were at issue. Gender, in fact, played a central role in the separate reports filed by the Ad Hoc Committee. The pro-football recommendation argued that the program at Oberlin benefitted the entire school. It warned that the College, "may inadvertently limit its male applicant pool if it abolishes football." This claim was based on the assumption that the sport attracted male applicants, both athletic and nonathletic. Another point in their argument was that scholar athletes,

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<sup>182</sup>Blodgett, pp. 2-3. Recommendation #1.

<sup>183</sup>Author's interview with Judith Flohr.

<sup>184</sup>Doug Learner, "Rethinking educational athletics," The Oberlin Review, February 1, 1978. pp. 4, 13.

such as football players, played an important role in, "expanding, improving and diversifying the pool of male applicants to the College."<sup>185</sup>

The anti-football contingency refuted many of these claims. They saw recruiting, even for football, as contrary to the goals of athletics at Oberlin. In addition, they thought the department was unable to meet the needs of the student body and focusing many of the department's resources on one sport would only further hinder its overall performance. Both sides agreed a substantial commitment, especially from financial perspective, was required to build the team up to a competitive level. On the basis of the recent history of the team, the anti-football contingency doubted that anything less than an extensive financing and recruiting effort would fail to build a "competitive" program. It was very unlikely that the vast sums to achieve this level would be provided either by the school or donations. They pointed to the administration's frustration with the department's annual overspending as an indication of the College's reluctance to invest heavily in the department. Furthermore, the outside funds that had sustained the team for the last three years were due to expire after the 1978-79 season. None of these factors indicated the College had the capacity to provide for a competitive football team.<sup>186</sup>

In addition, they questioned what effect a competitive team would actually have on the male applicant pool. Carl Bewig, the Director of Admissions, said that it was "difficult to separate" what effect football versus the entire athletic program had. He suggested that a women's soccer program might have a better chance of increasing the applicant pool, though its benefit for the male applicant pool was dubious. Dave Clark, the Vice President of Internal Affairs for Oberlin, added a final point, claiming that, "Football, or the lack of it, has no impact on alumni giving."<sup>187</sup>

Ben Bolte, a student writing for The Oberlin Review, echoed the anti-football positions and directly related it to women's sports:

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<sup>185</sup> Doug Learner, "GFC huddles: Football faces toughest foe," The Oberlin Review, February 10, 1978.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. In Murray Sperber's College Sports INC., he argues that alumni donations are unaffected by the presence of a strong athletic program. pp. 78-79.

...So why attract players for a dying football program, kept alive solely by alumni and recruiting, when other student-athletes come of their own volition? The resources used for football could easily be redirected towards some of the "lesser sports" (with greater participation than football). Women athletes might especially benefit from a re-allocation of funds. And the stadium would not go to waste with field hockey and perhaps soccer playing there. My point is, why do we need to try to make a football program work, when all the other sports take less effort and money. Given the choice of football, which would benefit the greatest number of people?<sup>188</sup>

The future of the Physical Education major and the football team directly affected the welfare of the women's athletic program. The events that surrounded the major illustrated the direction and philosophy that the department was moving towards and, what is more important, the administration revealed its athletic priorities. Football, for many, represented an emphasis on male intercollegiate sports, which due to the necessity to recruit and field competitive men's teams meant that the general student body's opportunity to participate would be limited. In contrast to the emphasis on athletics, especially football, the Physical Education major focused on the intellectual aspects of human activity through such classes as kinesiology, exercise physiology, coaching methodology and sport sociology with less intense attention paid to sports. These had traditionally been more gender equitable aspects of the college's athletic program. People supporting this position believed the competitiveness of the intercollegiate teams should remain secondary to providing opportunity for the student to experience sports. Ruth Brunner argued that, "without a major, academic courses would lack a professional *raison d'être* in the department and would in all likelihood not be taken seriously."<sup>189</sup>

On March 3, 1978, the General Faculty met to vote on the football issue. The two most powerful issues in the debate were the effect dropping football would have on the male applicant pool and alumni donations. Little discussion concerned the sport's effects on the

<sup>188</sup>Ben Bolte, "Phys Ed: A Major Fumble," The Oberlin Review, February 14, 1978. p. 2.

<sup>189</sup>Scott Duncan and Mickie Sherman, "Faculty to consider abolition of PE major," The Observer, November 1, 1979, p. 2.

broader departmental or athletic issues. The debate viewed the football team primarily as a commodity, a marketing issue, losing even a sense of its value to the players.<sup>190</sup>

The pro-football camp based their argument on the premise that football helped the College. Professor Lawrence Buell, a Professor of English and former Dean of Admissions, said that, "A good strong football program will significantly help the admissions picture for Oberlin College," implying its ability to recruit male students. The size of the school's male applicant pool was a source of consistent worry. Historically, Oberlin College's male applicant pool has trailed behind that of its women's. Yet, the suggestion that an admissions officer who focused on male applicants was largely ignored in favor of the indirect appeal factor of football. Perhaps the College feared its masculinity was at stake. Its supporters sold football as a factor in drawing certain male applicants to the College, either to play or to watch the sport.<sup>191</sup>

Professor Robert Piron felt that arguing over "nickles and dimes" to keep football put the school in jeopardy of losing "megabucks" from the alumni. He asked Mr. Clark if this assumption were true. Clark, deviating drastically from his earlier statement said, "we will be running a substantial risk with our largest and oldest donors."<sup>192</sup>

Professor of Anthropology Albert McQueen countered that football was the most expensive answer to the male applicant problem. By dropping football, he suggested, "we

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<sup>190</sup>The pro-football position paper submitted with the Ad Hoc Committee's report discussed the benefits of football for the participants. Yet, these points were not raised at the GF meeting.

<sup>191</sup>Drew Eginton, Steve Choban, and Steve Holmes, "Athletes cite misconceptions," The Oberlin Review, 1978. "Male applicants rose by an even 300 in the two years that present-coach Riendeau recruited," this letter to the Review claimed. The observation that the increase was due to Mr. Riendeau's efforts and the allure of the football team seems dubious at best.

<sup>192</sup>Doug Learner and Michael Duffy, "Football wins new season," The Oberlin Review, March 6, 1978. p. 1.: Bonnie DeSimone argued that eliminating football would, "...both practically and symbolically detract from the prestige and reputation of our PE department as a whole. Why? Because it would demonstrate to all, and notably to prospective students, that we are unwilling to support our varsity programs in times of crisis." The argument that dropping football would imply a lack of administrative support for the varsity programs would seemingly be more appropriate if applied to the major. Assuming that most students attended Oberlin for academic reasons, it would follow that the dropping of a major would have a much more profound effect on the "prestige and reputation" of the College Bonnie DeSimone, "Domino effect, Football cut would stifle athletics," The Oberlin Review, February 17, 1978, p. 2. DeSimone was the sports director for WOBC. Professor Piron worked in the Economics Department.

can bring up the applicant pool by upgrading other sports.”<sup>193</sup> An Oberlin Review editorial endorsed instead the idea of a recruiter for male applicants.<sup>194</sup>

In the end, the General faculty voted 79-48 to keep football, yet it did so without providing guidelines for funding or commitment for improving the team. The message was that the team would be retained, but improvement was not a priority. Moreover, as one dismayed faculty member observed, “there was no discussion about the effects on women’s intercollegiate athletics of maintaining the football program.”<sup>195</sup>

At the same time, the Physical Education Department voted to maintain the major. The department supported continuation of a range of academic classes.<sup>196</sup> These competing decisions ignored the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, and guaranteed that the department would continue to face many of the same problems.

Shortly thereafter, in the Spring of 1978, a joint committee of the College Faculty Council and the Educational Plans and Policies Committee met to consider the Ad Hoc Committee’s suggestions on the major. The joint committee concluded that, “‘continuation of the major in physical education and of the scope of academic course offerings required to sustain that major be considered as less essential’ than other existing and proposed curricular programs.”<sup>197</sup> This undercut the Physical Education Departments position on continuation of the major.<sup>198</sup> Professor Robert Longworth mentioned an “agreement” between the administration and the department to drop the major, but that the department changed its mind at the last moment.<sup>199</sup>

On November 6, 1979, the issue came before the general faculty. EPPC Chairman Sam Carrier, argued for the elimination of the major, stating one of the points of the anti-Physical Education platform: “The course offerings of the Physical Education department

<sup>193</sup>Leaner, “Football wins new season.”

<sup>194</sup>“Improve PE for all, Drop football and major,” The Oberlin Review, February 17, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Doug Learner, “PE Department plans for a continued major,” The Oberlin Review, 1978.

<sup>197</sup>Scott Duncan and Mickie Sherman, “Faculty to consider abolition of PE major,” The Observer, November 1, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Doug Learner, “Phys Ed major may be doomed,” The Oberlin Review, November 2, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>199</sup>Author’s interview with Robert Longworth, April 14, 1992, Oberlin, Ohio. Professor Longworth was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences during this period.

were too broad and that not enough depth was offered.”<sup>200</sup> He cited the loss of personnel due to the reduction of the department from 15 faculty members in 1968 to 11 by 1979.<sup>201</sup> In the view of the EPPC, the department was not capable of performing the same functions as it once had.<sup>202</sup>

Pro-Physical Education faculty members responded to Mr. Carrier’s claims. Professor Piron, “challenged his [Mr. Carrier’s] expertise on Physical Education matters in light of evidence that graduate schools regard the Oberlin Physical Education major as acceptable for graduate study.”<sup>203</sup> Professor VanNortwick added that, “if breadth were to be a deciding factor in the future of a major, ‘a lot of departments would be in trouble.’”<sup>204</sup> They pointed to Oberlin’s history as a leader in Physical Education and suggested that efforts be made to regain that status. Members of the department cited, “the propriety of a Physical Education Major in a liberal art curriculum.” They warned, “discontinuation of the Physical Education Major should not be used as a tradeoff for the football program.”<sup>205</sup>

Ruth Brunner concluded:

If there are problems in a department you don’t just eliminate the program, you work to improve it. Abolition of the major would constitute removing the very heart of the department, thereby weakening rather than strengthening it.<sup>206</sup>

Dean Longworth argued that, “no additional resources are available either for the maintenance or the improvement of the academic program in physical education,” and that the quality of the major had, “withered away to the point where it is not a credit to the institution,” which, he bluntly asserted, had little interest in reinvigorating it.<sup>207</sup> In the end, the department’s near-unanimous decision to continue the major convinced the College

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<sup>200</sup> Doug Learner, “Phys Ed major here to stay,” The Oberlin Review, November 9, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> Scott Duncan and Mickie Sherman, “Faculty to consider abolition of PE major,” The Observer, November 1, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. The second prong of the anti-PE argument was based on statistics that indicated that few students were attracted to Oberlin because of physical education.

<sup>203</sup> Doug Learner, “Phys Ed major here to stay,” The Oberlin Review, November 9, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. Professor VanNortwick was a Classics Professor.

<sup>205</sup> Doug Learner, “Phys Ed major may be doomed,” The Oberlin Review, November 2, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>206</sup> Scott Duncan and Mickie Sherman, “Faculty to consider abolition of PE major,” The Observer, November 1, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid

Faculty that voted 57-28 to maintain the major. Not until 1985 was the struggling major finally put to rest.<sup>208</sup>

While the College faculty saw no new solutions to old problems, the College Development Office nonetheless undertook a ten-year fundraising plan to raise \$250,000, targeted especially, but not exclusively at football. They did this despite the admission of Development Director, Dave Clark, who noted that athletics in the past has not generated substantial fund, and that, "the number of donors to Philips Gym was pathetic - a handful - no more than 30." He nonetheless alleged that football could generate alumni donations.<sup>209</sup>

For all the progressive trappings it wore, the College still functioned on a traditionally male-oriented sports agenda. Football, a men's sport, was favored over Physical education, a more gender-equitable arena of participation. Moreover, women's athletic would continue to struggle to gain equity as a result of this decision.

The administration had pushed to drop the major, but at the same time was contemplating courses of action to improve the football team. They were taking Ms. Brunner's advice, but for the football team's benefit. Obviously both programs required a great effort to attain the desired level of quality, but the administration had selected football as the program to be revived. No mention was made of dropping both programs, which were both accepted as being weak, in favor of improving the remaining departmental programs to benefit of a greatest number of students. The College had put forth arguments that only served to reveal where their true priorities lay.

This attitude made the College very typical in its approach to athletics. It was unable to imagine a thriving athletic program without the centerpiece of football. However, the financial costs of a football team are not to be taken lightly. By choosing to have a football team, Oberlin had decided to hold onto a program that was a drain on the rest of the

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<sup>208</sup>Doug Learner, "Phys Ed major here to stay," The Oberlin Review, November 9, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>209</sup>Eric Breslin and Michael Duffy, "College seeks football funding," The Oberlin Review, April 28, 1978, p. 1.

department and its welfare. After all these decisions, the College had failed to address issues of gender equity, equality and Title IX.



## Chapter VI:

### Still Teething. Women's Athletics from 1977-1982

There is a tremendous spirit and competitive drive in the Oberlin female athlete that has gone untapped.

-Doug Learner, "Women's Sports:  
Coping with and without coaches."<sup>210</sup>

By the 1977-78 athletic year, problems developed in the women's portion of the Physical Education Department that consistently plagued it well into the next decade. Similar to the developing women's athletic programs across the country, the coaches for Oberlin College's lagged far behind in numerous areas compared to their male counterparts. Foremost, they lacked many of the support structures which were available to the men, most notably in the forms of assistant coaches, budgetary allowances, publicity and administrative backing. Second, only a small number of department members coached these teams, which meant faculty resources were thinly spread. The final problem that served to exacerbate the situation was their nearly complete lack of any formal training in coaching competitive intercollegiate athletic teams.

Thus, from 1977 to 1982, three intertwined themes recur: lack of adequate administrative support to develop a healthy women's athletic program, an undersized women's coaching staff, and their general lack of preparation to meet the growing demands of female athletes.

### Coaching

The surge in the number of women who participated in intercollegiate athletics was a positive sign for the future of the program. Unfortunately, during this period, the program was ill-suited to meet the ever-increasing demand, which peaked in 1978-79, when 181 women were on varsity teams. (See appendix C) Thirty women tried out for the volleyball

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<sup>210</sup>Doug Learner, "Women's Sports: Coping with and without coaches." The Oberlin Review December 14, 1979, pp. 1,6.

team, a turnout that led to the creation of a junior-varsity squad. While this was good for the players, it doubled the workload for the coach who lacked an assistant. Because no new coaches or assistant coaches were added, the women were overburdened.<sup>211</sup> Two of the women in the department coached three varsity teams on top of their responsibilities to teach Physical Education and activity classes. This situation had not precedent or parallel in the men's department. The women's coaches found providing quality leadership to numerous teams a difficult, if not an impossible, stretch.<sup>212</sup>

Until 1982-83, a pronounced lack of assistants hindered the women's program.<sup>213</sup> The benefit of these assistants was clear to Ms. Culhane, who underscored the benefit of assistants for the quality of the women's program:

...Assistant coaches are a benefit to the athletes, as well as to the head coach. The athletes receive more attention and coaching expertise, in addition to which, the coach is able to communicate with a peer concerning ideas and problems that arise during a season. For the most part, the rapport between head and assistant coaches was excellent, hence improving team cohesiveness and spirit.<sup>214</sup>

The 1978-79 athletic year was typical in the number of hardships which sprung up in women's program. Ruth Brunner who had been the women's basketball coach went on sabbatical in 1978. Judith Flohr, who was already coaching the women's swimming and tennis team's, was "volunteered" to coach basketball team, even though she had little experience.<sup>215</sup> At the same point, Jan Wignall became ill. Her assistant took over the

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<sup>211</sup>Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to the President," 1977-78, p.5; 1978-79, p. 6; 1979-80, p. 7; 1980-81, p. 5; 1981-82, p. 1,2,5; 1982-83, p. 1,5; 1983-84, p. 1,2,4. The difficulty faced by the coach of the women's lacrosse team illustrated the general atmosphere under which all the women's coaches had to function. "Jan Wignall took over the responsibility and attempted to coach both the Varsity and Junior-Varsity and carry out other responsibilities which would be assigned to a manager. The assignment was too great to surmount when the coaches' attention was so divided." PMPF.

<sup>212</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to Emil Danenberg, President," July 16, 1979, p.2. PMPF.

<sup>213</sup>Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to the President," 1977-78, p.5; 1978-79, p. 6; 1979-80, p. 7; 1980-81, p. 5; 1981-82, p. 1,2,5; 1982-83, p. 1,5; 1983-84, p. 1,2,4. PMPF.

<sup>214</sup>Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1982-83 to Robert Longworth, Dean of the College," July 15, 1983, p. 2. PMPF.

<sup>215</sup>Author's phone interview with Dr. Judith Flohr, March 26, 1992. Dr. Flohr is currently a professor of Physical Education at James Madison University. She left Oberlin after the 1980-81 athletic season because she feared the PE major was going to be dropped. She worked for the College of Wooster, which subsequently dropped their PE major.

coaching responsibilities for field hockey while an Oberlin graduate took over lacrosse, even though she had no college coaching experience.<sup>216</sup>

Women's coaches who had no experience were the rule and not the exception at Oberlin. Earlier in the decade, the coaches limited experience was acceptable since their ability was at the same level as the athletes for which they were responsible. By the late 1970s, however, the female athletes at Oberlin had developed to the point that they expected greater competency in skill development and strategy from their coaches. At this point, the number of women participating in athletics had settled at about 150 women. Both the students and the coaches were devoted to fielding competitive teams, but because their training and indoctrination originated in a different generation, the coaches could not provide what the female athletes wanted.

The basketball team was a striking example of how the rapid development in women's athletics caught many of the instructors off-guard. Women had been playing basketball at the start of the century, but it was only during the last decade and a half that they had been playing competitively. In addition, they were no longer forced to play with an archaic rule system designed to keep the game feminine. These rules had required the players wear full length dresses and limited the number of times a player was allowed to bounce the ball during a given possession. The abolition of these rules enabled the women to improve, yet, for the most part, the coaching did not.<sup>217</sup> This change was obvious to Ms. Culhane:

The incoming athletes this year were much more skilled than previously and expected to have a competent, enthusiastic coach and for the first time [basketball] team members registered dissatisfaction with the present situation to the Athletic Director and Chairman. This matter needs to be rectified in the early Fall. The women athletes coming to Oberlin have experienced for the most part competent and demanding coaches and fully expect to receive similar experience here.<sup>218</sup>

The basketball program was regularly singled out as having the greatest coaching deficiency of any of the teams:

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<sup>216</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to Emil Danenberg, President," July 16, 1979, p.2. PMPF.

<sup>217</sup>Culhane, "Annual Report 1981-82," p. 7.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid p. 7-8

A serious problem exists in this sport in the coaching ability of the coach. Of all the sports, basketball demands the most coaching during the competitive event. The coach has to make quick, on site analysis and adjustments. This is a glaring weakness in the present coach and the players are keenly sensitive to this fact and expect a change for the coming year.<sup>219</sup>

Ms. Flohr believes that the lack of movement towards hiring more qualified coaches indicated the lack of commitment or interest the administration had towards improving the women's athletic program. The department was changing during difficult times for the College. The women's program had expanded during the College's freeze on faculty hirings and needed more money as the budget was being trimmed. Furthermore, due to the unusual circumstance of Ms. Wignall and Ms. Calmer's leaves, hiring was difficult in the department.<sup>220</sup>

Ms. Culhane identified Ms. Flohr, the swimming and tennis coach, and Ellen Staurowsky, the new field hockey and lacrosse coach, as exemplary, high quality and necessary coaching additions. While they were able to provide the type of leadership that was sought by the student body, they were limited by the tenuous nature of their positions. This ultimately led to a degree of instability which served to inhibit the still-developing program's growth.<sup>221</sup>

Ms. Flohr came to Oberlin College in the Fall of 1977 as a one-year sabbatical replacement for Barbara Calmer. The next year, her contract was renewed, but this time she replaced Ruth Brunner who left for sabbatical that year. This situation contributed to the overall lack of stability in the department. In 1979, the administration decided to modify one of the faculty slots by splitting it between two faculty members. The Heisman Club, Oberlin's athletic boosters, provided money to fund half of the three year non-tenure track position for Ms. Flohr.<sup>222</sup> The positions were split 50-50 between administrative and faculty status. Because of the significance of the administrative component, the College

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<sup>219</sup>Ibid p. 7.

<sup>220</sup>Author's interview with Judith Flohr.

<sup>221</sup>Culhane, "Annual Report 1981-82," p. 7.

<sup>222</sup>Doug Learner, "Women's Sports: Coping with and without coaches." *The Oberlin Review* December 14, 1979, pp. 1,6: The Heisman Club had changed its focus from solely helping football to assisting the whole Physical Education Department.

could terminate Ms. Flohr with only thirty days notice.<sup>223</sup> In addition, the money funding her position was not guaranteed to be continued after the three year term expired.

Ellen Staurowsky was hired to coach the women's field hockey and lacrosse teams three days after classes started in the Fall of 1979. At the age of 24, Ms. Staurowsky had recently completed a graduate degree in sports psychology at Ithaca College. She was a temporary replacement for Jan Wignall who had taken a disability leave. The department was unable to hire Ms. Staurowsky permanently since Ms. Wignall had tenure.<sup>224</sup> The College had a standing policy of not replacing tenured faculty members until their retirement, even though Ms. Wignall was seriously ill. Hence, Ms. Staurowsky was forced to wait each year to see if she would be in the College's employment the following year.<sup>225</sup>

Both of these women were in their mid-twenties and had competed in the sports they coached. "As a result they possess an attitude that is more competitive than their colleagues in the department, and more in tune with today's female athlete."<sup>226</sup> When Ms. Staurowsky began coaching the field hockey team the Fall of 1979, she stunned the players by employing techniques that reflected her attitude towards sports and competition: "[The upper-class women] had never seen a coach at Oberlin yell at a female player to help her improve."<sup>227</sup>

The more competitive and competent style of coaching these two women practiced was well received, but they coached half of the sports and the remaining teams were left wanting. Though, all the "old guard" had made efforts at improving their coaching abilities, there was still a generation gap in sports philosophies that was difficult to bridge. Ms. Culhane seemed to have been most aware of the changing attitude and sought training to improve her coaching skills.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Author's phone Interview with Judith Flohr .

<sup>224</sup> Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to Emil Danenberg, President," July 16, 1979, p.2. PMPF.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid p. 4

<sup>226</sup> Ibid p. 6

<sup>227</sup> Ibid

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Mary Culhane, former Director of Women's Athletics, Oberlin, Ohio, December 10, 1991.

Ms. Staurowsky was more of a modern, competitive coach than many of her female departmental colleagues. She subscribed the AIAW philosophy which integrated some of the older women's Physical Education philosophies with a more competitive sport ethos, yet avoiding the win-at-all-costs mentality prevalent in men's athletics.

An excellent example of this philosophy was Ms. Staurowsky's initiation of a class in lacrosse which developed both interest in the sport and skilled players for the teams. As a result, she was able to field varsity, junior varsity and intramural teams in lacrosse. In the 1980-81 season, 37 players came out for the lacrosse team.<sup>229</sup> The following season, 1981-82, twenty-six players made the team. Her efforts did cause a problem for her though, since a squad of novice players made her job a juggling act between coaching and fundamental skill development.<sup>230</sup> The players' required different management since:

many of the lacrosse players had no previous experience since they learned the sport at Oberlin and also may not have played in a varsity sport and hence are not used to the higher expectations of a Varsity coach.<sup>231</sup>

Ms. Staurowsky's efforts were notable for two reasons. By providing the opportunity to learn, participate and compete for any student she had revived what had been a staple in Oberlin's athletic policy. As a result, women's athletics were not being isolated as activities for a few elite students. Second, Ms. Staurowsky was incorporating aspects from traditional male and female models of sport, stressing the educational benefits of sports, but not shying away, and in fact embracing, the positive role competition can play in the development of a student-athlete.<sup>232</sup>

For all the benefits these two women brought to the program, their lack of job security was never close to being resolved. With the swimming/tennis position being funded from outside sources, and the field hockey/lacrosse position kept on functioning on a year-to-year basis, the two women were in a "tenuous situation."<sup>233</sup> This arrangement limited the

<sup>229</sup>Culhane, "Annual Report 1980-81," p. 9.

<sup>230</sup>Culhane, "Annual Report 1981-82," p. 9.

<sup>231</sup>Ibid.

<sup>232</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1979-80 to Emil Danenberg, President," July 14, 1980, p. 3-4.; I can quote a section of Oberlin's 1951 athletic policy which stipulated that all should have the opportunity to participate if they so desire. The athletic policies of the 1970s were much less "creative."

<sup>233</sup>Author's phone interview with Judith Flohr.

continuity in the program, and made for a good degree of anxiety for Ms. Staurowsky to have to wait to get reappointed each year.<sup>234</sup> It also served to inhibit their ability to plan for the following year, mostly in the area of recruitment. They did not feel comfortable asking a player to come to Oberlin without knowing if they would be there as coaches. This instability was perpetuated for the following year.<sup>235</sup>

Ms. Flohr felt that the administration was revealing its indifference towards the women's program by their slow resolution of this problem. As long as the school had a program they were seemingly satisfied, unconcerned with wins, losses or the quality of the program itself.<sup>236</sup> She asked, "Philosophically, how did the institution live with itself knowing the difference in job security between women and men?"<sup>237</sup> The College was seemingly unable to resolve the conflict between the economic reality of limited funds and the philosophical, moral, and equally realistic issue of gender equity in athletics. Dr. Flohr felt that the school placed a greater emphasis on the football program and as a result was unwilling and unable to provide the support of the women's program she would have liked. In her opinion, "Oberlin College would be okay without football due to the type of student-athlete who can come to OC and is attracted to OC."<sup>238</sup>

While she thought the College should take advantage of its strengths instead of shoring up a weakness, she realized the decision to maintain the football program had already been made and consequently, she theorized, so had the limited degree of College's commitment to the women's program.<sup>239</sup>

## Athletes

The combination of Oberlin women and intercollegiate athletics was not a simple affair. Players' actions and desires were rarely consistent and often contradictory. Much as the

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<sup>234</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1979-80 to Emil Danenberg, President," p. 4 sections 2a and 2b. PMPF.

<sup>235</sup>Author's interview with Judith Flohr.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid.

“old guard” had been outstripped by the oncoming wave of change, the athletes themselves were challenged to keep pace with their expressed athletic desires. Adapting to a competitive model of athletics was not simple, and a basic understanding of the commitment which was required to follow this model took time to develop.

The women who swam and ran on Oberlin’s men’s teams in the early 1970s were the pioneers of the women’s athletic program at Oberlin. They laid the foundation for the establishment for women’s teams in those sports. Yet, the women who followed them did not quickly embrace all the trappings of competition that followed. The annual reports from the women’s athletic program during this period indicate the difficulty in introducing female athletes to the expectations of varsity membership.

While Ms. Culhane described many years as “successful” for the women’s cross-country team, there remained a problem with the female runners not making a serious commitment to the sport.<sup>240</sup> She wrote: “The sport has the Fall Break to contend with and as it comes near the end of the season, the previous intended commitment is broken when the vacation period arrives.”<sup>241</sup> Dick Michaels, the Head Coach, described the problem:

I told our women. Hey great...We got a championship race for you. And I couldn’t get them to come back. I could not get them to come back because they said their break was too important to them. I just about lost it...Here we raised hell for five years trying to get equal competition for them and they wouldn’t come back for their damn race.<sup>242</sup>

According to Mr. Michaels, this attitude was, “part of the...intramural mentality that women had at the time.”<sup>243</sup> He characterized them as having said, “I like to run and I demand to have everything that the men have, but I don’t think I can give my break up.”<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>240</sup>Mary Culhane, Women’s Athletic Director, “Annual Report for 1980-81 to Emil Danenberg, President,” July 15, 1981, p. 7. PMPF.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup>Author’s interview with Dick Michaels, Head Coach Oberlin College men’s swimming team, Oberlin, Ohio, March 12, 1992.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid.

<sup>244</sup>Ibid.



The female athletes were developing a philosophy of athletics which increasingly emphasized competition, but which did not exclude many of the older "play-day" principles about athletics. Carol Weiss, a cross-country runner, described her reasons for being on the team as an opportunity to, "run with other people and have an opportunity to train." She "readily" admitted that she didn't like competition, but that she did like to run.<sup>245</sup>

Mr. Michael's took to explaining what was required of the runners:

...Here's the deal if you are going to be on this team, this is a varsity team this is not an intramural team. You will do the following. If you are asked to come back...to run in championship, you will come back. If you don't, you don't get credit, you don't letter and you don't get shoe money.<sup>246</sup>

His role as coach of the team went further than only being an instructor in the activity, it included indoctrination of what being a varsity athlete meant according to the College. Mr. Michaels may have presumed a male model of competitive athletics, yet his expectations stressed critical non-gendered issues. When Mr. Michaels explained what was expected of them to function as a team one woman said, "gee, is it that important?"<sup>247</sup> Though this conversation took place in the mid-1970s, Ms. Culhane noted that this absenteeism problem continued into the 1981-82 season.<sup>248</sup>

### The Impact of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Takeover of Women's Athletics

Women have stood on the sidelines long enough. We are finally becoming seriously involved in sport - enjoying the physical, psychological and social benefits they offer, but men continue to try to deny us our rights.

-Anne Kessen, Oberlin College student and athlete on the proposed takeover of women's athletics by the NCAA.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>245</sup>"More women running with the times" Doug Learner. The Oberlin Review September 16, 1978. P. 9

<sup>246</sup>Author's interview with Dick Michaels.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid.

<sup>248</sup>Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1981-82 to James Powell, Acting President," July 15, 1982, p. 6. PMPF.

<sup>249</sup>Anne Kessen, "Women's Sports: power to the AIAW." The Oberlin Review, November 18, 1980, p. 2

The passage of Title IX in 1972 cast the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the governing bodies for men's and women's intercollegiate athletics respectively, as adversaries. After the NCAA's repeated failures at neutering Title IX to protect the cash-cow of men's athletics, its leaders altered their tactics. Once they accepted that women's athletics were cemented into place, the NCAA chose to co-opt control of them to dispel the perceived threat of the AIAW.<sup>250</sup>

By the end of 1979, the NCAA announced that it was considering holding five championships (basketball, field hockey, swimming, tennis and volleyball) for women in the near future. This move set off a huge debate over which body should control women's athletics.

During his first months in Oberlin, Jack Scott attempted to foster an athletic consciousness amongst the female athletes, to make them treat sports as their right and not a privilege. Women athletes began to take an active role in the department, pursuing the needs for their program. They had continued to develop this consciousness and realized the gravity of the power-struggle that was taking place.

In less than eight years, the female athletes and faculty had successfully nurtured a varsity athletic program, and yet the decision-making power that they had established was threatened. Unwilling to sit idly by, Oberlin's female athletes and faculty organized to show their support for the AIAW and the need for Oberlin to remain as a member of the organization. Judith Flohr led a panel discussion to explain the importance of the AIAW to women's athletics. "All we want to express," said Flohr, "is that there is a working model for women's athletics and there are some very significant reasons why we should stick with that model."<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup>Murray Sperber, *College Sports Inc., The Athletic Department vs. The University*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), pp. 324-5

<sup>251</sup>"AIAW vs. NCAA Women athletes gather to defend goals" R.B. Brenner *The Oberlin Review* November 18, 1980. pp. 1, 5

Joanne Roth, a student and member of the swim team, recognized the conflict as one between philosophies. "While the NCAA has attempted to reject the bill [Title IX] on at least five occasions, the AIAW has made a total commitment to Title IX." When the efforts to defeat the bill failed, the NCAA chose to take over women's sports. Roth commented that she, "found it difficult to see how they can change and make a serious commitment to women's athletics when they have opposed Title IX for so long."<sup>252</sup> Ted Tow, an NCAA official explained the NCAA's change of heart about Title IX and women's sports was because, "it is difficult to run equal programs when they are under different governing bodies."

Anne Kessen wrote an editorial in the Oberlin Review outlining why the AIAW was superior to the NCAA as an organization for women's athletics. The issue of which governing body to join was not an idle intellectual decision. Many people saw the NCAA as, Ms. Kessen termed it, a, "serious threat...to women, student-athletes and intercollegiate athletics." The NCAA's proposed championships elicited an enormous emotional response from women who had just begun to flourish as athletes. Having struggled against numerous societal obstacles set in place by men to achieve autonomy in sport, women now saw relinquishing that independence as unfathomable.<sup>253</sup>

As a female athlete, Kessen saw student involvement and the training of women for leadership and coaching positions as "two major advantages of AIAW governance." The AIAW had two students with voting privileges on the executive board and guaranteed a student on every sports committee. The NCAA gave no voting rights to the students and only six students could sit on five of twenty-seven committees. Kessen and her fellow female athletes thought this policy was contrary to a philosophy that intended college sports to benefit students. In addition, the NCAA would guarantee only one of the six slots for a woman. This in no way reassured the female students that their interests were going to be considered, nor that the NCAA cared about them.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup>Ibid

<sup>253</sup>"Women's Sports: power to the AIAW" Anne Kessen The Oberlin Review November 18, 1980 p. 2

<sup>254</sup>Ibid

Oberlin had to send a representative to January's NCAA meeting to cast the school's vote on whether the NCAA should become involved in women's sports.<sup>255</sup> The College solicited the opinions of the female athletes and coaches because as George Andrews, the Athletic Advisory Committee Chairman, said, "women should be in charge of their destinies on this thing."<sup>256</sup> The women impressed it upon Mr. Andrews that the NCAA "cannot be depended upon to be sympathetic to the needs of women athletes."<sup>257</sup>

The College attended the meetings and voted against the NCAA's proposal to hold championships in women's athletics. Despite Oberlin's vote against it, the proposal passed. Mary Culhane predicted that "the possibility of the AIAW's not surviving is very real" as a result of this vote. "The AIAW has to rely on fees from its members and the membership base is being cut by the NCAA's action." The vote also "confused" the state of women's athletics since a school could be a member of the AIAW and still participate in an NCAA sponsored championship, though that would not last for long as the NCAA would begin to pressure teams to join their organization. By June 1982 the AIAW had folded.<sup>258</sup>

An interesting paradox had developed as the women's athletic program evolved. The female athletes had rallied to the cause of their program as seen by their activism during the NCAA/AIAW clash. While this activism had a positive influence on the program itself, according to Ms. Culhane it had a debilitating effect on the performance of the teams. The women who were able to work as a team for the program's benefit were described as "very individualistic and analytical"<sup>259</sup> when they participated on varsity teams. Ms. Culhane found this attitude made, "a team coaching position more difficult."<sup>260</sup> In 1981, Ms. Culhane explained teamwork as, "a result of sublimating the ego for the good of the

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<sup>255</sup>Oberlin's male athletic teams were members of the NCAA.

<sup>256</sup>Carla Hess, "College leans to AIAW in coming vote," The Oberlin Review, December 5, 1980, p. 1

<sup>257</sup>"In defense of AIAW" Editorial The Oberlin Review, December 5, 1980, p. 2.

<sup>258</sup>Sperber, p. 326.

<sup>259</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report to Emil Danenberg, President," July 16, 1979, p.3-4. PMPF.

<sup>260</sup>Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1980-81 to Emil Danenberg, President," July 15, 1981, p. 7.

team." She saw this as, "a factor that is needed, but difficult to attain."<sup>261</sup> According to the reports, this problem inhibited the team's level of play. It was a problem, which for the most part, carried on into the mid-1980s.

### Budgets, Facilities, and Departmental Services

A common thread that ran through the fabric of the women's program, was that it was always in the process of evolving. Since the women gained varsity status in 1974, the way in which the department was organized and operated was continually refined. As the athletes were becoming accustomed to a new approach to athletics, so too were the directors of the women's program. Only through experience did they gain knowledge of what the needs of an intercollegiate athletic program were.

Ms. Culhane's dealings with the athletic budget typified the learning process. The initial \$1000 allocated for women's extramurals in the early 1970s had increased each year to reach \$35,000 by the 1978-79 athletic year.<sup>262</sup> While this was a positive sign that efforts were being made to meet the demand of the program, the budget was continually cited for lagging behind. This was not necessarily due to an unwillingness to fund the program, but instead was a result of an ongoing discovery of what was required. Growing schedules, the need for home and away uniforms, additional equipment, and miscellaneous expenditures for the lining of fields and setting up and removal of bleachers were just some of the items that annually became part of the budget and necessitated an increase in overall funding.<sup>263</sup>

For the 1977-78 athletic season, the costs incurred by the women's program were adequately met by the money that had been allocated. Yet, the following year due to the expected growth of the program the budgetary request did not remain static. Ms. Culhane pointed out that while the budget often fell short of the program's eventual needs,

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<sup>261</sup>Ibid.

<sup>262</sup>Doug Learner, "Women's Sports: Coping with and without coaches." The Oberlin Review December 14, 1979, pp. 1,6, and Culhane, "Annual Report," July 16, 1979, p.4.

<sup>263</sup>Culhane, "Annual Report 1977-78," p. 4.

supplemental money was usually provided to make up for any shortages.<sup>264</sup> Increasing costs were not unique to the women's program, but they differed from the men's program in that the men's budget was at an equilibrium while the women's was still striving towards that goal.<sup>265</sup>

Ms. Flohr remembered a different budgetary procedure. While the men received whatever amount of funding they needed, "it got to the point that they [the women's coaches] had to inflate the numbers to get what they needed."<sup>266</sup> She gave as an example ordering twenty swimsuits for the swimming team to be certain that she would receive the ten she needed. She also corroborated a point made repeatedly by Ms. Culhane's reports. The travel money that paid for meals was usually inadequate. It was not unusual for Dr. Flohr's teams to make their own bag lunches to ensure having food when travelling. The College did offer a bag lunch service for the teams, but few teams availed themselves of this service because it required, "so many day's pre-notice, and the charges are for the number given, even if it turns out to be less."<sup>267</sup>

There were other problems that were noted annually. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Culhane stressed the need for assistant coaches to alleviate the substantial workload of the head coaches. It would not be until the mid-eighties when all the sports would have assistants. This lack was another difference between the men's and women's programs.<sup>268</sup>

Another consistently cited problem was the department's facilities. Hales and Philips gymnasiums had been designed as mostly exclusive buildings for women and men respectively. Since the department's unification this exclusivity was an obstacle for both programs. The men's locker room in Hales was small and made for cramped conditions. Likewise, in Philips, most of the women's teams had to dress in the general locker area.

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<sup>264</sup> Author's interview with Mary Culhane

<sup>265</sup> Culhane, "Annual Report for athletic years: 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82." PMPF.

<sup>266</sup> Author's phone interview with Judith Flohr.

<sup>267</sup> Mary Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1982-83 to Robert Longworth, Dean of the College," July 15, 1983, p. 3. PMPF.

<sup>268</sup> Culhane, "Annual Report for athletic years: 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82." PMPF.

"Men athletes have separate team locker room and visiting team locker areas and the women athletes have no team locker room or separate areas for visiting teams."<sup>269</sup> Hales gymnasium, which had the greatest number of women's lockers, had not been designed with a large-scale women's athletic program in mind. As a result, many of the athletes had to shuttle between facilities to change, receive treatment from the trainer, and use whichever sports area was needed.<sup>270</sup>

Not only did this situation inconvenience the teams, it also made hosting any State, Regional, or National tournaments impossible since the space was not available to do so.<sup>271</sup> Hosting tournaments inconvenienced both men and women as the men would usually have to vacate a portion if not all of their locker room to make hosting the tournament possible. Yet, the College had done nothing to alleviate this problem.<sup>272</sup>

In the 1978-79 annual report, for the first time, Ms. Culhane pointed out that a problem, in this case the lockers, were, "in an area which Title IX specifically covers." She also notified the administration of the problem in a letter. James Powell and Vice President for Business and Finance Dayton Livingston subsequently toured the facilities, but no further response from the school was noted.<sup>273</sup>

Ms. Culhane wrote:

The locker room disparity in Philips Gym became more apparent to both the men and women athlete when the locker rooms were exchanged during special events what were held. For three special events during this past year the women used the men's locker room in order to accommodate the visiting teams and the men's team used the women's rooms. We will continue to have problems in this area as long as this situation remains the same.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>269</sup>Ibid. p. 6

<sup>270</sup>"Annual Report for 1977-78," p. 2-5

<sup>271</sup>"Annual Report for 1978-79," p. 5.

<sup>272</sup>Ibid. P. 4: According to Joe Gurtis, (as told to me on 3/17/92 most recently) the Department had regularly notified the Administration that the Philips locker room disparity was not only a logistical problem and inconvenience, but also a Title IX violation waiting to be reported. These notices had been largely ignored since the mid-late seventies and even when in written form such as in the annual reports, they still elicited no response. Why the College chose to ignore the problem is not known, though financial shortfalls and apathy seem highly likely as reasons on this issue.

<sup>273</sup>"Annual Report for 1979-80," p. 6.

<sup>274</sup>Annual Report for 1980-81 Mary J. Culhane, Director of Women's Athletics. to Emil Danenberg. July 15, 1981. p. 4. PMPF.

One of the main services of an athletic department is the provision of training services for its athletes. The trainer usually performs a myriad of tasks such as taping limbs, diagnosing sports-related injuries and prescribing a rehabilitative program, and attending games in the event of an injury. Oberlin College's training services were not equitably dispensed. In her annual report for 1976-77, Ms. Coville described the inequity:

Too often the Head Trainer and assistants were giving time to the men while neglecting to cover the women's sports. More trainers, better utilization, and increased time of the Head Trainer to the women's program are needed. Men's contact sports obviously need trainers, but women's sports did not receive training attention adequate to their needs.<sup>275</sup>

By the 1981-82 athletic year, the situation had improved somewhat due to the initiation of a course that instructed students in the basic principles of athletic training.<sup>276</sup> However, the improvement was marginal, according to Mary Uscilka, a student member of the Women's Sports Committee:

Athletes, women in particular, are not receiving proper care...  
...There are several problems with the College's provisions for securing the safety of athletes, the most obvious one being a lack of personnel. Currently, one full-time trainer and several student assistants are responsible for more than 300 athletes participating in 18 varsity sports.<sup>277</sup>

The understaffing meant the field hockey and volleyball teams spent most of the 1981 season without having a trainer or an assistant at their games. This proved to be dangerous since, "Several times [field hockey] players were injured on the field and there was no trainer around."<sup>278</sup>

The limited number of trainers usually resulted in players having to dress in one building and then hunt down the trainer in another building to be taped. If this transit were between the field house and Hales gymnasium players risked risk being late to practice.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>275</sup>Claudia Coville, Women's Athletic Director, "Report on the Women's Athletic Program 1976-77 to Dayton Livingston, Jim Powell, Mary Culhane," p. 3. PMPF.

<sup>276</sup>Ibid p.3

<sup>277</sup>Mary Uscilka, "Additional trainers needed for women athletes," The Oberlin Review, December 4, 1981, p. 3.

<sup>278</sup>Ibid.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid.



Ms. Culhane noted the addition of Jeff Davis as the Sports Information Director (SID) as, "a measurable improvement." Mr. Davis and his staff publicized "All" sports well. This deviated from the national story, where the "major sports" received the bulk of the attention from the S.I.D. and the remaining 'minor sports' become mere footnotes in the athletic newsletters and press releases.<sup>280</sup>

The developing athletic consciousness of Oberlin's women reached a turning point, when in April 1981, several students filed a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights in Department of Education "alleging that Oberlin College discriminates on the basis of sex in its intercollegiate athletic program."<sup>281</sup> The following chapter will examine the investigation of Oberlin College's compliance with Title IX.

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<sup>280</sup>Annual Report: 1985-86 Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director to S. Frederick Starr, President. June 27, 1986. p. 1. Emphasis in original. PMPF.

<sup>281</sup>Kenneth A. Mines, Regional Director to Dr. S. Frederick Starr, President. December 7, 1983. Chicago, Ill. Don Hunsinger's Private files, hereafter referred to as DHPF.

## Chapter VII:

### The Title IX Compliance Review of Oberlin College

For many years, Oberlin exemplified sexual equality in education, having established itself as the first coeducational college in American. Despite this tradition, Oberlin has not shown initiative in bringing sexual equality to collegiate athletics.

-Lisa Daly, Oberlin  
College student-athlete.<sup>282</sup>

After years of notifying the administration of the problems with the locker rooms and the coaching situation, the female athletes of Oberlin College pursued a new direction with hopes of achieving a satisfactory resolution.<sup>283</sup> In September of 1981, a group of female athletes sent a letter to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) division of the Department of Education's regional office in Chicago. The letter described Oberlin College's discriminatory policies against women and hence, its violation of Title IX.<sup>284</sup>

The letter to OCR specified three areas of violation. The disparity in lockers was foremost. The letter noted that, "female athletes are assigned either one-third or one-half size lockers in Philips Gym. In contrast, the men have a locker area at least four times the size of the women." The second complaint involved the coaches, noting that all the men's varsity coaches were tenured, but only four of the eight women's coaches were tenured. They specified that the women's field hockey/lacrosse position, which had to be renewed annually, was especially problematic. They claimed the College had, "aggravated the situation by failing to review the position until April," making recruiting difficult and placing undue stress on the coach.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup>Lisa Daly, "Title IX change threatens women's sports," The Oberlin Review, September 22, 1981, p. 2, 6. Daly was a Senior and a member of the field hockey and lacrosse teams. She was the spokesperson for the women athletes who filed the complaint against the College.

<sup>283</sup>I had to rely private files for most of this chapter since Oberlin College lacks a Title IX officer (a requirement under Title IX) who could have assisted me in my research. Additionally, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences was reluctant to release the documentation.

<sup>284</sup>Richard Lorant, "Women athletes charge College with unlawful sex discrimination," The Oberlin Review, September 25, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>285</sup>*Ibid*; Daly, September 22, 1981. p. 2.

The final complaint concerned the athletic training services provided for the varsity teams. When the trainer's position was initially created, the job was intended to cover the men's sports only, but had since been expanded to cover the women's program. The female athletes felt the treatment they received was inadequate compared to the men's. Furthermore, most of the women's teams changed in Hales gymnasium, but had to travel to another facility either Philips gymnasium or Jones field house to see the trainer.<sup>286</sup>

Almost a year later, on August 27, 1982, OCR sent a letter to Oberlin College informing the school that, "it had been selected for a Title IX compliance review addressing its intercollegiate athletics program."<sup>287</sup> The letter specified that OCR had been alerted to violations, "in the areas of coaching, locker rooms and recruitment of student athletes."<sup>288</sup> This did not correlate with the letter announcing the Title IX complaint published in The Oberlin Review. The letter did not cite recruitment of athletes as an area of violation; instead the letter focused on the coaching situation's impact on recruitment and team development. Furthermore, OCR gave no indication that the female athletes viewed the training services inadequate.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Robert Longworth, gave the administration's public response to the investigation:

We have everything to gain from from a compliance review, except for the time and energy lost in the cumbersome administrative side of it. The College wants to do a better job, so any suggestions for change are gladly received. If the investigation does find fault, the College will obviously feel chagrin, but in the long run it is our best interests, as far as maintaining a standard of equal treatment.<sup>289</sup>

While it is unlikely that Dean Longworth would have said anything negative about the investigation, it is interesting that he claimed that the, "College wants to do a better job," and that, "any suggestions are gladly received." Few of the College's actions before the

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<sup>286</sup>Ibid

<sup>287</sup>Kenneth Mines, Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights to Dr. S. Frederick Starr, President of Oberlin College. Chicago, Illinois, December 7, 1983, p. 1. Don Hunsinger's private files. DHPF.

<sup>288</sup>Ibid.

<sup>289</sup>Ibid.

notification of the investigation indicated that either statement was based on a realistic appraisal of the College's recent treatment of the program. The College had been regularly notified of the problems that existed in the department, but had rarely initiated any remedies. Even when members of the department indicated that the inequity regarding the locker rooms was a likely Title IX violation, the administration made no response. Mr. Longworth explained that many of the decisions the College was making were based on available funding.<sup>290</sup>

On September 1, 1982, Dr. Mary Frances O'Shea, Director of the Postsecondary Education Division for OCR, sent a letter to Acting President James Powell. She informed him of all the areas OCR would require information and data on to process the Title IX review. Following this notice, she explained that the College's status as a recipient of Federal financial assistance made them, "subject to the rules and regulations implementing Title IX as administered by the Office for Civil Rights."<sup>291</sup> The specific Title IX regulation for which the College was being reviewed states:

(a)General. No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis.<sup>292</sup>

She indicated that the College's compliance would be determined by, "comparing the availability, quality and kinds of benefits, opportunities, and treatment afforded members of both sexes. The investigation will take into account non-discriminatory factors that may justify differences in standards and benefits."<sup>293</sup> She then listed the eleven general areas of

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<sup>290</sup> Author's interview with Robert Longworth, Professor of English, April 14, 1992, Oberlin, Ohio. Professor Longworth is the former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

<sup>291</sup> Mary Frances O'Shea, Director of the Postsecondary Education Division for the Office of Civil Rights, to James Powell, Acting President, Oberlin College. Chicago, Illinois, September 1, 1982, p. 1. DHPP.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid. This is from 34 CFR 106.41 of the Title IX regulations issued by OCR. The word "recipient" refers to institutions which receive Federal financial assistance.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. This statement is typical of OCR's approach to Title IX investigations. They did not look to see if there was literal equality between the programs, rather that the programs were "equal in effect" so that there was no difference in the opportunity available to either sex. Hence, it was possible to provide differential services, monies, equipment as long as it did not create an unequal opportunity for one sex over the other.

the athletic program that would be investigated along with the financial aid available to the athletes. (See appendix D)

Finally, she informed Mr. Powell of a related item to the investigation:

It is our responsibility to inform you that if any individual is harassed or intimidated by the College because of this compliance investigation or participating in this investigation, such individual may file a complaint alleging such harassment or intimidation with our office.<sup>294</sup>

According to Fred Shults, some members of the department were relieved that OCR decided to investigate the College. He said that a federal investigation was one of the few remaining ways that they could get the administration to act on issues it had failed to address in the past.<sup>295</sup> Some department members were not pleased to be the subjects of a compliance review since two female coaches, Ellen Staurowsky and Judith Flohr, found themselves the focus of threats. An example of which occurred when a copy of the article announcing the Title IX investigation was taped to Ms. Staurowsky's door along with an unsigned note that told her to "watch your politics."<sup>296</sup> Being a young coach hopeful of a long career in athletics, Ms. Staurowsky explained that filing a harassment complaint could potentially have been hazardous for her future. For a female coach being labeled a troublemaker was the athletic equivalent of excommunication.

For the following months a tremendous amount of correspondence (in excess of 150 single-spaced pages) ensued between Dr. O'Shea's office and the College, specifically Dean Longworth. Nearly every two weeks, Dean Longworth received a new information request from OCR on subjects such as Oberlin's financial aid policy, the work load of the department members, where the Heisman Club funds were allocated and in what amounts, and information on Oberlin's special housing and dining facilities for

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<sup>294</sup>Ibid. p. 2

<sup>295</sup> Author's interview with Fred Shults, Oberlin, Ohio, March 12, 1992.

<sup>296</sup> Author's phone interview with Ellen Staurowsky, March 17, 1992.

athletes.<sup>297</sup> Explanations were also sought for the problems with the women's field hockey/lacrosse coaching position.<sup>298</sup>

The College received notification from OCR on February 22, 1983, that an on-site investigation would be performed the second week of March. The College was asked to arrange a tour of the athletic facilities and set up interviews with a host of faculty members. Additionally, the College was told to notify the campus of OCR's visit, and to explain "the types of discrimination prohibited by Title IX."

On March 8, 1983, Dean Longworth wrote a memo addressed to the "Members of the Oberlin Community" notifying them of OCR's visit and the laws and regulations that pertained to the investigation.<sup>299</sup> The memo explained that, "the investigation will be carried out according to those regulations." He did not elaborate on what exactly "those regulations" were.<sup>300</sup> Some students complained that the College did a poor job notifying the student body of the on-site investigation. Sharon Ross, captain of the women's swim team said, "The only reason I know people are coming to review the department is because I'm a team captain and they wrote a letter saying they wanted to talk with me. If I were another athlete on the team, I might never have heard of it."<sup>301</sup>

On March 15, 1983, a team of federal investigators from OCR arrived in Oberlin to conduct the on-site portion of the Title IX compliance review. During their stay, they met with members of the Physical Education Department, Acting President Powell, Dean Longworth, Director of Financial Aid James White, and various team captains. The OCR representative collected assorted paperwork for analysis such as admissions brochures, a

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<sup>297</sup>Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, December 17, 1982, p. 1; Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, February 3, 1983, p. 1; Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, May 13, 1983, p. 2; Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, July 12, 1983, p. 1; Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, June 28, 1983, p. 1. The Heisman Club funds reportedly paid half the salary and benefit costs of William Jordan and Michelle Ennis, Assistant Professors of Physical Education, \$12,400 towards the women's intercollegiate athletic program, and \$10,000 towards the men's intercollegiate athletic program. DHPF.

<sup>298</sup>Dean Robert Longworth to Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, October 3, 1983, p. 1. DHPF.

<sup>299</sup>The memo was sent to the Office of College Information, The Oberlin Review, and the Observer

<sup>300</sup>Dr. Mary Frances O'Shea to James Powell, Acting President. Chicago, Illinois, February 18, 1983, Chicago, p. 1.2. As a result, anyone unfamiliar with the law was unlikely to associate a problem with the Physical Education Department with a Title IX violation. DHPF.

<sup>301</sup>William Tuthill, "College to be reviewed for Title IX equality compliance," The Oberlin Review, March 15, 1983, p. 1.

schedule for the athletic facilities, application and enrollment data for 1980, 1981, and 1982, and copies of the men's and women's sports budget sheets.<sup>302</sup>

On December 7, 1983, Kenneth Mines, the regional director for the Office for Civil Rights, sent the a fifty-page Statement of Findings to S. Frederick Starr. In describing the evaluation process Mr. Mines noted that:

It is important to note that we compared the men's program and women's program on an overall basis, rather than a sport-by-sport basis that would pair, for example, men's basketball and women's basketball...Where the disparities were not negligible, we determined whether they were the result of nondiscriminatory factors. Finally, we determined whether disparities resulted in the denial of equal opportunity to male or female athletes because the disparities collectively were of a substantial and unjustified nature or because the disparities in individual program areas were substantial enough in and of themselves to deny equality of athletic opportunity.<sup>303</sup>

OCR investigated 13 areas (See Appendix), two more than had been indicated in earlier correspondence. Of the 13, 12 were found to be "providing male and female athletes with equivalent benefits, opportunities and services."<sup>304</sup> These areas included three that, at some time or another, had been specified as part of the original complaint.

The circumstances pertaining to the unstable coaching situation for women's field hockey and lacrosse were an area of "concern" for OCR. Dean Longworth had explained to OCR that the problem existed because of Ms. Wignall's extended absence from the school on a disability leave. He wrote that, "Oberlin College also is gravely concerned about those circumstances," but, added that, "some athletes neither understand nor fully appreciate those circumstances."<sup>305</sup> In conclusion he wrote that, "In my judgment, the circumstances about which you [OCR] have expressed concern reflect our determination to honor our commitment to a tenured member of the faculty...The arrangements made to permit a leave of absence for Ms. Wignall on grounds of disability are non-

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<sup>302</sup>Dr. Mary Frances O'Shea, Director Postsecondary Education Division to Dr. Robert Longworth, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Chicago Illinois, April 8, 1983. pp. 2-3, attachment. DHPF.

<sup>303</sup>Mines to Starr. December 7, 1983, p. 2. DHPF.

<sup>304</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>305</sup>Ibid.

discriminatory.”<sup>306</sup> Ellen Staurowsky, the coach affected by the situation, understood the factors involved with her predicament, but found fault with the College’s lack of effort to achieve a more stable status for her. “In any college program, especially sports, there has to be some kind of permanence,” she said, “without it, the women’s program propagates an aura of mediocrity and will continue to be treated like a stepchild.”<sup>307</sup>

OCR determined, “33% of the women athletes were negatively affected by a yearly appointed coach.” However, due to the non-discriminatory nature in which the situation came about, they decided that it did not constitute a violation of Title IX.<sup>308</sup> Effectively they had judged that while the outcome of the field hockey/lacrosse situation created an inequity, the intent to discriminate was not present, hence no Title IX violation was committed. Nonetheless, the College failed to rectify the situation and exacerbated the problem by delaying Ms. Staurowsky’s reappointment till late March or April for several years.

Ms. Daly’s original letter of complaint also cited the dispensation of training services. Oberlin employed one full-time trainer, assisted by an intern and student-trainers. OCR found that while there was a problem with the training services, it, “was found to equally affect both male and female athletes.” Since the problem did not inconvenience one gender more than the other, OCR determined the College was providing equivalent benefits.<sup>309</sup>

The equality of Oberlin College’s recruitment practices, which were never truly specified in the original complaint, but were somehow attributed to it were also examined. OCR’s conclusion was based on a determination that the College was providing equal opportunity to participate in the athletic program:

...Recruitment at private colleges and universities should be examined only if equivalent athletic opportunities are not present

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<sup>306</sup>Robert Longworth, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to Ms. Mary Frances O’Shea, Director of Postsecondary Education. Oberlin, Ohio, October 3, 1983, p. 1.2. DHPF.

<sup>307</sup>William Tuthill, “College to be reviewed for Title IX equality compliance,” The Oberlin Review, March 15, 1983, p. 1.

<sup>308</sup>Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Region V, “Statement of Findings,” Chicago, Illinois, December 7, 1983, p. 20. DHPF.

<sup>309</sup>Ibid, p. 29-32.



for male and female students. Since Oberlin College is a private college and equal athletic opportunities are being provided for male and female students, no evaluation of Oberlin College's recruitment practices were required.<sup>310</sup>

The remaining area named in the complaint was the locker room facilities. Interviews with the women's teams revealed that 74.6% of the female athletes were subjected to overcrowding in the locker rooms. The overcrowding was either the result of limited space in relation to team size or because the team lacked a private locker area and had to change with the general student body. In contrast, OCR found that none of the male athletes experienced overcrowded conditions.

A factor in the overcrowding, but a separate issue unto itself, was that 60.1% (five of nine teams) of the male students were provided with exclusive locker rooms while only 14.5% (one of eight teams) of the women athletes were afforded the same amenity. OCR found that, "the disparity found in locker rooms was considered to be of sufficient weight to find overall inequivalence for this area." The College was informed that it was, "not providing, overall, equivalent benefits and opportunities in this area."<sup>311</sup>

Dean Longworth had been in contact with OCR in November 1983, before the release of the statement of findings. Dr. O'Shea had indicated by this point that the locker room situation was problematic and suggested that the College formulate plans to bring the school into compliance.

Dean Longworth proposed three plans to provide private areas for the women's teams. The College had consulted legal advisers on what the minimal response could be. Dean Longworth explained that the College wanted a cost-efficient resolution.<sup>312</sup> The first suggestion entailed, "the mounting of draperies that can be drawn to provide exclusive locker space for the use of each team." The second option involved the construction of three permanent partitions in the locker room to create three separate team rooms. The projected cost of this renovation was between \$10,000 and \$20,000.<sup>313</sup> A third

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<sup>310</sup>Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid, p. 25-28.

<sup>312</sup>Author's interview with Robert Longworth.

<sup>313</sup>Robert Longworth, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to Dr. Mary Frances O'Shea. Oberlin, Ohio, November 11, 1983. DHPF.

suggestion, and the most costly, was to renovate Philips gymnasium to accommodate women's locker rooms. Dean Longworth wrote that he would discuss these options with the female athletes and faculty to determine their preference.<sup>314</sup>

Mary Culhane was "disappointed" that the College favored the renovation of Hales gymnasium. She pointed out that the women's volleyball, basketball and swimming teams needed locker rooms in the building in which they competed, Philips gymnasium. Dean Longworth agreed that, "enlarging or enclosing locker space in Philips might better meet the needs of the teams."<sup>315</sup> However, he explained the College was reluctant to commit to the most expensive option considering the existence of other pressing needs within the department. One of the needs that he identified was the addition of an irrigation and drainage system for the playing fields. He explained that the estimated cost of renovating Philips would have severely restricted the College's ability to finance the other capital expenditures.<sup>316</sup>

Nearly a year later, on October 25, 1985, the Associate Vice President for Operations finally announced that renovations in Philips gymnasium would begin the following summer to expand the women's locker rooms. The equipment room was moved to the storage room north of the squash courts and the vacated space was turned into varsity lockers for women.(See appendix A)<sup>317</sup>

The Title IX complaint and compliance review showed tangible results only in the renovation of Philips gymnasium. The College's response illustrated a questionable concern for its women's athletics program and problems that existed within it. Many problems, not solved by the Title IX investigation, continued to plague the women's program and to a larger extent, the entire Physical Education Department.

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<sup>314</sup>Ibid. Dr. O'Shea modified Dean Longworth's proposal by adding a clause stipulating that the College would consult with OCR if an alternative plan to the three mentioned above was decided upon.

<sup>315</sup>Carol Ganzel, "Athletic Program in compliance but lockers found to be unequal," *The Observer*, January 19, 1984, volume 5, no. 9, p. 2.

<sup>316</sup>Mr. Longworth also indicated that the College was not eager to give money to a department that was consistently exceeding its budget.

<sup>317</sup>Joseph P. Metro, Associate Vice President for Operations to Don Hunsinger, Jeff White, Sherry Gutman, Joe Gurtis and Mary Culhane, Oberlin, Ohio, October 25, 1985. DH PF.

## Chapter VIII:

### Coming Into Focus. The Reformation of the Department of Physical Education

The second half of the nineteen-eighties presented yet more changes for a department that had been in flux since 1969. Most of these changes were implemented with the intent of allowing the department to settle and focus on its function versus bogging down in a problematic department structure. Even while the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) was in the midst of its investigation, changes were effected which were intended to improve the efficiency of the department. To achieve this transformation, the College shifted the school's athletic conference affiliation and overhauled the inner-departmental structure.

### The Formation of the North Coast Athletic Conference

Oberlin College had helped to found the Ohio Athletic Conference in 1902, yet by the early 1980s, the College, and other similar institutions, had grown increasingly dissatisfied with growing disparity between the athletic powers of the OAC and the other schools in the conference. Schools such as Baldwin-Wallace and Wittenberg University continually dominated in football and basketball, but at the expense of their other sports. Their emphasis manifested itself in granting financial aid packages to athletes that conflicted with Oberlin's philosophy on financial aid. James Powell questioned these practices, fearing they undermined the spirit of Division III and OAC athletics by treating athletes differently than other students.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>318</sup>"From A to Z: forming a league a complex task...." *The Oberlin Review*, March 4, 1983, p. 3. Larry Shinn, then Chairman of the Athletic Advisory Committee, gave an example of the sort of financial aid packaging Powell spoke of. The three-tiered divisional structure of the NCAA is based on the percentage of financial aid a school can offer. Division three schools are classified as offering between 0 and 10% financial assistance. Shinn explained, "Suppose your financial need is assessed at \$5,000. At Oberlin, \$2,500 of that would be provided by the school and \$2,500 by the student (through loans, work study). Some OAC schools were giving athletes all \$5,000 in scholarships."

Oberlin considered shifting its affiliation to the President's Athletic Conference (PAC) to play in a league better suited for Oberlin's talent level and athletic philosophy.<sup>319</sup> Joining the PAC was not considered to be the best possible scenario because of the large distances necessary to play some conference members. The College began looking for alternatives to the PAC and the OAC.

In June of 1982, Philip Jordan, the President of Kenyon College, called a meeting of presidents and athletic directors from several Ohio and Pennsylvania colleges and universities. These schools were similar in both their academic standards and the competitive level of their athletic programs.<sup>320</sup> Additional meetings throughout the summer and the fall resulted in the decision to form a new conference.<sup>321</sup>

In 1984-85 athletic season, the newly formed North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) began its first year of operation. The new conference was innovative compared to other athletic conferences for two reasons. One was the close participation of member college presidents to monitor the balance between the academic and athletic programs. Their participation was a safety check to ensure that member schools did not employ questionable recruiting techniques to improve their athletic squads. On the national level, the NCAC mirrored a trend in collegiate athletics that saw college and university presidents attempting to gain control of what seemed to be a collegiate athletic system rife with corruption and waste.<sup>322</sup>

Second, the NCAC was the first athletic conference with equal treatment for men and women's athletics incorporated in its constitution from its inception. Preexisting

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<sup>319</sup>The PAC's member schools were: Allegheny, Bethany, Carnegie-Mellon, Case Western, John Carroll, Hiram, Thiel, and Washington & Jefferson.

<sup>320</sup>Carol Ganzel and Roberto Santiago, "Conference members plan first season, The Observer, volume 5, number 5, October 27, 1983, p. 3.; "Playing games," The Oberlin Review, March 11, 1983, p. 2. Other schools which participated in the meetings besides Oberlin and Kenyon were: Allegheny, Case Western Reserve, College of Wooster, Denison, Ohio Wesleyan. Wittenberg University was denied admittance even though its average SAT scores matched or exceeded those at some of the above-mentioned colleges. Some claimed that this was a sign of elitism among these institutions, but probably was more due to Wittenberg's superiority and pronounced emphasis in athletics. Later, Wittenberg would join the NCAC. Interestingly, soon after the NCAC was announced, the OAC "decided" to offer a women's division and to restructure its administrative system to incorporate this addition.

<sup>321</sup>"Conference members plan first season" Carol Ganzel and Roberto Santiago. The Observer October 27, 1983. volume 5 number 5 p. 3.; Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Annual Report for 1983-84 to Fred Starr, President of the College," June 30, 1984, p. 1.

<sup>322</sup>Murray Sperber, College Sports, INC. p. 333.

conferences that were coed had to go through a restructuring process to integrate women's athletics and provide equal representation. The NCAC avoided this problem by drafting a constitution that guaranteed women positions on all administrative committees.<sup>323</sup>

There was only one snag with the NCAC's progressive stance towards women's athletics. Since September of 1982, Oberlin College's women's athletic program had been a member of the Centennial Athletic Conference (CAC).<sup>324</sup> It provided a governing structure for women's intercollegiate athletics in Ohio, operated by the women it served.<sup>325</sup> The dissolution of the CAC was imminent because the NCAC included many of the colleges that belonged to the CAC.

The NCAC's position on equality was well received by the female athletes and faculty, but there were some misgivings. Polly Lodge, a member of the field hockey and lacrosse teams, explained their position:

We (women athletes, coaches and athletic directors) worked very hard to organize the CAC. Then just when the league was getting going, we found out about this new conference. I think it's good that the college presidents were so involved, because they can look out for the entire institution's needs, but in this case it caused a real breakdown in communication.<sup>326</sup>

Ellen Staurowsky and Ruth Brunner were both cautious in their response of the new conference. The NCAA's takeover of women's athletics from the AIAW was only three years old, and they feared the consequences of joining the male-dominated NCAC. The CAC provided direct control over women's athletics without any of the problems which might arise from being in a conference with the men's programs. Both women worried that a coed conference might entail loss of autonomy for women. Ms. Staurowsky explained that since each school had only one vote in league policy matters and wondered if, "when push comes to shove, the men's perspective will dominate."<sup>327</sup> Both women

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<sup>323</sup>"From A to Z: forming a league a complex task....," The Oberlin Review, March 4, 1983, p. 3.

<sup>324</sup>Annual report 1981-82

<sup>325</sup>Author's conversation with Joe Gurtis March 19, 1992, Oberlin, Ohio.

<sup>326</sup>Ibid.

<sup>327</sup>"From A to Z: forming a league a complex task....," The Oberlin Review, March 4, 1983, p. 3.

agreed, however, that the initiative to put women on an equal level from the beginning was a positive sign and believed that the conference deserved a chance.<sup>328</sup>

### The Restructuring of the Physical Education Department

By 1984, the department still had problems and substantial changes were necessary to correct them. The administration found the department's failure to maintain a financially prudent budget procedure as a prime indication that systemic problems existed within the department's administrative structure. The department had exceeded its budget for many years. Some of the varsity programs consistently ran over their budget by thousands of dollars. Cost overruns had never been problematic as auxiliary funds were always available to cover them, but the financial imprudence the department displayed frustrated the administration. The College gave the department a standard budget increase for the year 1985. However, they, "insisted that the department work within its budget, and produce a detailed outlining how it will do so."<sup>329</sup>

The department claimed that it needed more money to adequately run its programs. The College's tighter financial policy meant that the department would have to choose between offering many teams and fewer, more competitive teams. Rumors circulated that the cap on spending could mean that some varsity teams would be dropped. Coaches of the respective teams feared fighting for the future of their sports.

Tied into the budgetary problems was the question of what level of competitiveness Oberlin's athletic programs should strive for. Don Hunsinger maintained that, "you have to have quality sports," to recruit the kind of athletes needed to build a winning athletic program. To achieve "quality sports" Mr. Hunsinger suggested dropping some teams for the benefit of the other teams. Heather Setzler, the new field hockey/lacrosse coach, pointed out that, "there is a wide disagreement on what quality is."<sup>330</sup>

<sup>328</sup>Carol Ganzel, "Brunner has seen women's physical education change," The Observer, January 17, 1985, volume 6, number 9, p. 3.

<sup>329</sup>Peter Baker, "Budget tight, sports teams may be cut," The Oberlin Review, March 8, 1985, pp. 1,6.

<sup>330</sup>Ellen Kremer, "Threat to cut teams angers athletes," The Oberlin Review, March 18, 1984, pp. 1, 20. The situation which existed at this point seemed to be rife with disagreement. Some felt that Mr. Hunsinger's position as head football coach and chairman of the department was an inherent conflict of interest. In addition, they could

The financial straits continued into 1985 when the budgetary increase was not enough to meet the funding requirements of the department as that point. Department Chairman Don Hunsinger said, "If you to the grocery store with \$20 and you want \$28 worth, what do you do? You have to alter your list."<sup>331</sup> Within the department, staff members debated various recommendations regarding how to alter the list. One of the recommendations suggested dropping men's lacrosse and women's field hockey while another plan called for dropping four teams altogether. Those in favor of these recommendations claimed, "the only alternative to cutting teams would be having a substandard program." Others felt that the discussion of dropping the teams was a way to, "dramatize the department's financial plight."<sup>332</sup> The programs were not dropped, forcing the administration to act. The result of the department's quandary was the forthcoming stabilization of the women's athletic program.

In the first week of March of 1985, the Educational Plans and Policies Committee (EPPC) voted 10-2 in favor of a recommendation to abolish the Physical Education major. Unlike the previous EPPC vote to eliminate the major this decision was supported by departmental members. The staff members argued that the department was unable to offer a quality Physical Education major. As the department had increased its emphasis on athletics, it had decreased the importance of teaching in its hiring process. This shift in priorities had created a faculty less qualified and/or inclined to teach a major. The recommendation did not mean the cessation of academic classes in the department only that class offerings would be at the discretion of the faculty members, except for the science-related courses necessary for the education of student trainers.<sup>333</sup>

Resistance to dropping the major came from elsewhere in the College. Joseph Sinder, Professor of Physics, said the end of the major might, "play down the relationship between

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not agree on how to work within the limited budget, cuts across the board, cut a few teams for the benefit of others? If the decision was made to cut teams, which ones?

<sup>331</sup>Ibid.

<sup>332</sup>Peter Baker, "Budget tight, sports teams may be cut," The Oberlin Review, March 8, 1985, pp. 1,6.

<sup>333</sup>James Affeld, "EPPC votes to drop PE major," The Oberlin Review, March 8, 1985, pp. 1,10.; "Physical education major voted out," The Observer, April 11, 1985, volume 6, number 15, p. 3.

physical education and other areas of liberal arts education.”<sup>334</sup> Associate Professor of French Nelson de Jesus, felt, “departments should do more than teach students to do something.” He was wary of the department becoming “a service department” making its faculty, “second-class citizens, less able to compete for sabbatical replacements and merit raises.”<sup>335</sup>

Nonetheless, on April 2, the college faculty approved the EPPC recommendation and Oberlin’s Physical Education major, which had been a mainstay at Oberlin since 1896, was abolished.<sup>336</sup>

The 1985 departmental review took on added importance because of the major’s termination. It provided an opportunity for an outside opinion analyze the remaining problems about which members of the department were unable to be objective.

The College brought in two consultants: Jane Betts and Bill Grice. Ms. Betts was as Associate Professor of Physical Education and the Assistant Director of Physical Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mr. Grice was the Director of Athletics and Chairman of the Physical Education Department at Case Western Reserve University. He was also a former member of Oberlin’s Physical Education Department, but had left when Jack Scott arrived.<sup>337</sup>

The consultants’ summary of the state of team sports identified some of the long-standing problems. The addition of a women’s soccer team had evened the number of sports for men and women at nine apiece. Yet, there was disagreement on how to go about fielding these teams. Some felt that every member of a team at Oberlin should be a result of recruitment. Others felt that recruitment should be used to develop a “nucleus” of talent. They recognized recruiting as a way of attracting certain athletes for whom Oberlin was not

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<sup>334</sup>Ibid.

<sup>335</sup>“PE major voted out,” *The Observer*.

<sup>336</sup>Ibid.

<sup>337</sup>Ira Steinberg, Professor of Philosophy, and Jim Walsh, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, “Physical Education Department Review Report Of The Committee,” Spring/Summer 1985, Oberlin, Ohio, p. 2. They supported the abolition of the major, agreeing that the department was not able to adequately offer the quality required to sustain it. PMPF.



a natural choice. This position was best explained by Mary Culhane in her analysis of the recruiting problems experienced by the field hockey team:

After investigating past Oberlin field hockey season and then implementing a recruiting agenda for a year, I have come to some conclusions. Field Hockey players from top-notch high school programs are not enrolling at Oberlin College, whereas they do enroll at Denison University, Kenyon College, and the College of Wooster. Student-athletes who graduate from prep schools appear to prefer attending similar schools when pursuing their college education. Thus, recruitment efforts should reflect our needs as well as our limitations.<sup>338</sup>

Their report also noted the need for indoor facilities to provide practice areas for winter track and field and early practice areas for spring sports. In addition, the construction of this facility would also aid the equalization of, "the availability of locker room facilities for men and women generally at Oberlin."<sup>339</sup> Ms. Culhane proposed that the new field house, "...should allow for multi-use college recreation and intramurals, team and individual team varsity practice assignments and community use. It should not be limited to track/field and tennis."<sup>340</sup>

Except for two small paragraphs in the report, little discussion directly addressed women's athletics. Nonetheless, other issues had direct implications for the status of women's athletics. In discussions with staff members and students, the main response to questions concerning the chief weakness with the department was "leadership and structure." The report summarized the problem:

Some people felt that the difficulty was mainly in the way the Department was organized. It is nominally committed to a democratic sort of decision procedure among the staff. But then, some members of staff, though participants in discussion, do not get to vote. It is possible, for an outcome in a Department vote to be contrary to the wishes of the majority of the staff. In a Department where all but one of the tenured

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<sup>338</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Director of Women's Athletics Annual Report 1987-88 to S. Frederick Starr, President," No date given, p. 5. PMPF.

<sup>339</sup>Ira Steinberg, Professor of Philosophy, and Jim Walsh, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, "Physical Education Department Review Report Of The Committee," Spring/Summer 1985, Oberlin, Ohio. Pat Milkovich's Private Files (hereafter referred to as PMPF) p. 2. No mention was made of the Title IX decision nor its mandate that the College rectify this problem. Additionally, nowhere in the Women's Annual Reports was the Title IX investigation or decision mentioned. However, Ms. Culhane continued to note the discrepant locker situation every year until it was corrected.

<sup>340</sup>Mary J. Culhane, Women's Athletic Director, "Director of Women's Athletics Annual Report 1987-88 to S. Frederick Starr, President," No date given, p. 5. PMPF

faculty are men, this may tend to a male/female split on some issues. Democracy has also meant that authority is dispersed among the several coaches. Coaches demand considerable autonomy in control of their own sports and it is very difficult to reach agreement on Department wide policy affecting all sports. ...The students see all this as a lack of leadership or leadership structure. They want to know who is in charge.<sup>341</sup>

In addition, the priorities of the department were still unclear:

Some members of the staff have very strong feelings that coaching and developing winning teams comes first and foremost. Other duties should be secondary to those of coaching and recruiting. Others feel more strongly that the Department exists to provide Oberlin College undergraduates an opportunity to learn about and engage in all sorts of athletic activities and to play varsity sports. Some are concerned lest Intercollegiate Athletics become professionalized, with athletes who are here because their way is paid and otherwise not interested in what the Oberlin has to offer.<sup>342</sup>

After assessing the result of their evaluation, the review panel made its recommendations. They suggested that a director be appointed who had full authority and responsibility of the supervision of the department. Ms. Betts strongly recommended reorganizing the departments administrative structure. "Because of the uniqueness of intercollegiate athletics, there is a need for authority to be vested in an administrator on a permanently appointed basis."<sup>343</sup> She thought that this new director should be hired from outside the college. Though there were some departmental fears about bringing in outside leadership, she blamed "the Jack Scott experience" for these reservations and believed that "new administrative blood will surely help diminish the impact of that bad experience."<sup>344</sup>

The panel also suggested that all the future appointments in the department be made in administrative and professional staff (A&PS) positions and not as tenured appointments. The report cited the difficulty of acquiring faculty slots as one of the reasons for the problems in the women's program. Additionally, they suggested that the appointments be

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<sup>341</sup>Ira Steinberg, Professor of Philosophy, and Jim Walsh, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, "Physical Education Department Review Report Of The Committee," Spring/Summer 1985, Oberlin, Ohio, p. 5. PMPF.

<sup>342</sup>Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>343</sup>Jane Betts to William Scott, Associate Dean of Oberlin College, "Report of the External Review Committee for the Department of Physical Education," Boston, Massachusetts, May 14, 1985, p 2. PMPF.

<sup>344</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

made in three-year, renewable terms, rather than annually. This would enable the department to rectify the instability in the women's program caused by the one-year appointments.<sup>345</sup>

Ms. Betts pointed out that the College needed to decide what the goals were for its athletic program. The dropping of the major, joining the NCAC, and increased emphasis on recruiting signaled a shift desire for a competitive athletic program, but this had never been expressed. She suggested that the department be renamed to more accurately reflect the mission of the department. Calling itself the Department of Physical Education was outdated since it no longer offered a major.

A year later, the College began to implement many of the review panel's suggestions.

A goal for the department was formalized:

In intercollegiate athletics the goal is to be competitive. Virtually all the respondents in the interinstitutional telephone survey<sup>346</sup> took this to be the goal of their varsity programs and defined 'being competitive' as winning at least half the time overall and not being consistently poor in any one area. According to this definition, Oberlin is not currently competitive. To continue our overall program and to become competitive on present lines requires ongoing recognition of the different demands on staff time and the need for management coordination to insure equity in staff assignment in serving the varied aspects of the athletic and physical education program.<sup>347</sup>

With a clearly defined goal for the department initially in place, the practical aspects of restructuring the department were outlined in a proposal written by Associate Dean Ira Steinberg in January of 1989. He summarized one of the major changes in personnel designation that had been implemented after the 1985 departmental review:

In February of 1986 the department endorsed a plan for replacement and redefinition of staff positions in light of a schedule of anticipated retirements. It was agreed that there

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<sup>345</sup>Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>346</sup>The College had surveyed 25 peer institutions to develop a sense of how their Physical Education department (if they had one) and athletic program operated and under what classification. Additionally, they attempted to ascertain what the general "goal" of intercollegiate athletic programs were at Division III liberal arts institutions to facilitate Oberlin's redefining of its own goals.

<sup>347</sup>Ira Steinberg, Associate Dean, "Athletics and Physical Education: Proposal," January 17, 1989, Oberlin, Ohio, p. 6. PMPF.

would be no new tenureable appointments in the department and that positions would carry 51% A&PS and 49% faculty status.<sup>348</sup>

The remaining aspects of the reorganization dealt with the governing structure of the department. The chair of the physical education department along with the men's and women's athletic directors were replaced by a director of athletics and physical education, an associate director and assistant director. The appointment of a director followed the panel's suggestion that the department's leadership position be made less democratic to facilitate decision-making.<sup>349</sup>

Almost ten years after the Ad Hoc Committee had evaluated the program and diagnosed its ills, many of its suggestions were in place. The major had been dropped. Furthermore, the department was functioning with a defined set of priorities and a new organizational structure to facilitate achievement of those priorities. Finally, and most telling was the department's new name: "The Department of Athletics and Physical Education."

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<sup>348</sup>Ibid.

<sup>349</sup>John Gorman, "Optimistic Phys Ed dept praises its restructuring," The Oberlin Review, March 3, 1989, pp. 1, 22.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that the problems of Oberlin's athletic department, like those of athletic departments nationwide, were not so easily solved by the passage of Title IX. The College's reaction to the law and the requests of its female student body served to illustrate the difficulty the administration had comprehending the law. The concepts of compliance and equity seemed to have escaped the College, which at times was more concerned with the financial bottom line.

On June 23, 1992, Title IX of the Educational Amendments will be twenty years old. In those twenty years, Oberlin College has witnessed the birth and growth of its women's intercollegiate athletic program. It has not been a fluid nor a complete evolution. Jack Scott both helped and hindered the program's development. Yet, after overcoming the effects of his reign, the women's program has encountered limitations on its advancement. Many of the apparent discriminatory problems in the department were not the result of an intent to provide differential treatment. Rather, they were created by innocent policies that negatively affected the women's athletic program. Oberlin College's women's athletic program has persevered through many years of neglect to achieve a relative level of success.

Much of the progress of women's athletics at Oberlin College was the result of the activism of female student athletes from the early 1970s through the early 1980s, when students initiated the process by which Oberlin's athletic department underwent Title IX review. Some athletic personnel have supported the students' quest for equity. The combination of the converted members of the "old school" and the new generation of women's coaches who came to Oberlin during and after the Scott crisis were particularly responsive to and supportive of the students' pursuit of their goal.

How Oberlin College's athletics will fare in the future depends on many factors. Some of the problems that existed in the department a decade ago still plague it. The program's

volatility has abated, but not disappeared. This past year, the women's program operated with only two-full time coaches, one who was also the associate athletic director and the other was responsible for coaching two sports. Next year will bring with it an almost entirely new women's athletic faculty. The high faculty turnover rate is disturbing, yet understandable. Three years have passed since the department was restructured, but the program still lacks stability due, in part, because the College's support for women's athletics at Oberlin has been highly inconsistent.

Title IX was cast into the waters of collegiate athletics twenty years ago this year only after a long and difficult battle. Things have been anything but calm since then. Huge sums of money have been spent and many years of labor have gone into the conflicting efforts to constrain or further Title IX's scope. Women's programs were up against some solid obstacles including a government that was content with a policy of passive enforcement of Title IX, administrations that were not committed to women's athletics, and problems of limited funds.

The recent Supreme Court case of *Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools* strengthened Title IX by allowing financial damages to be awarded in the event of a violation. This decision offers the promise of better days for women's athletics. Still, the final word on Title IX has yet to be written.

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## Appendices

## Major Features of the New Gymnasium

Space: 115,000 square feet

Main Gymnasium (equivalent of three full size courts for classes,  
volleyball, badminton, basketball, exhibition court,  
intramurals, all College events)

Portable seating for 1,800 spectators

Olympic size swimming pool with spectator  
seating for 650

1 Doubles squash court

8 Singles squash courts

6 Singles handball courts

Locker facilities for 1350 men and  
150 women

3 Multi-purpose rooms

Wrestling room

Fencing room

Exercise room

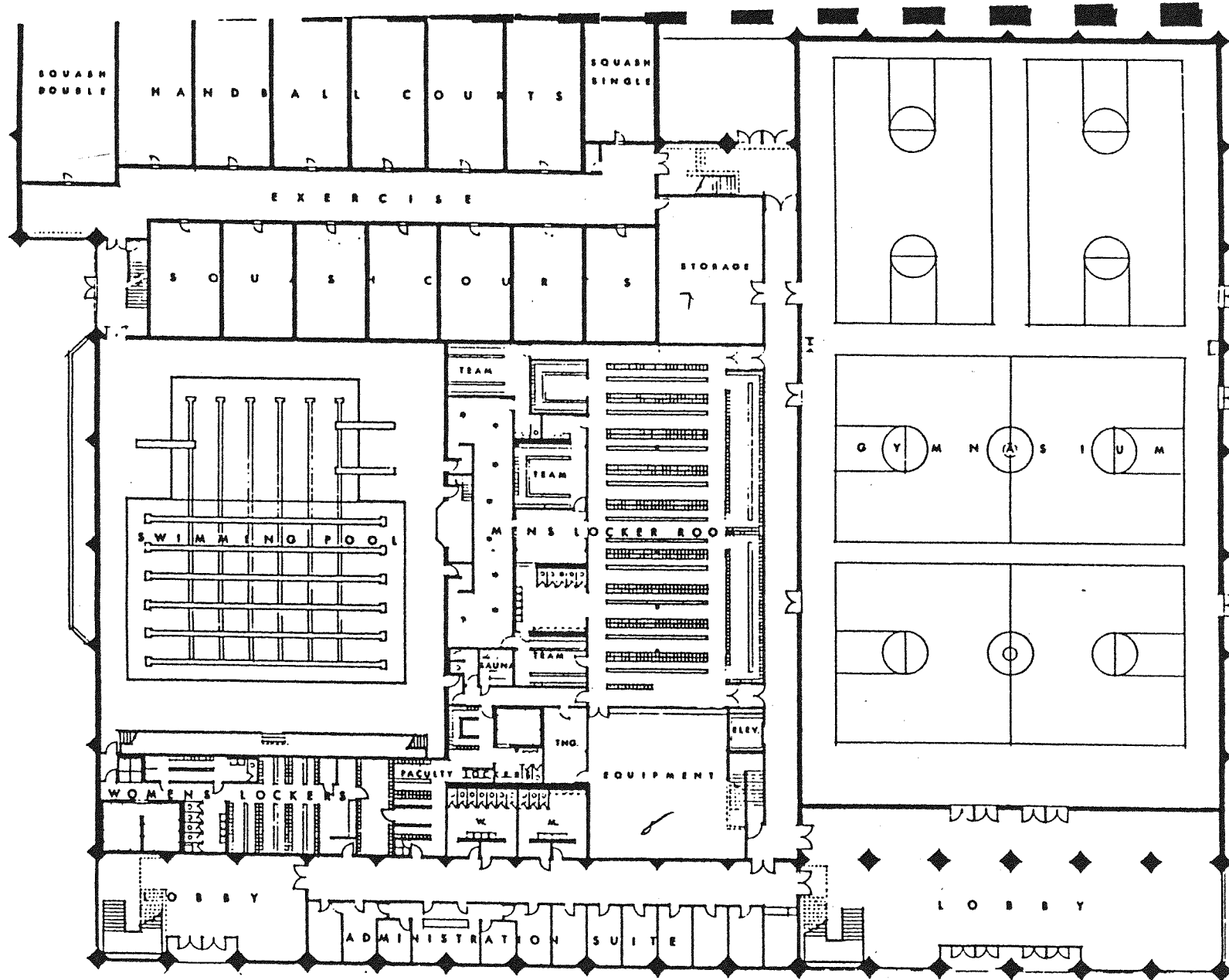
Research laboratory for the major program

Projected cost of the facility: \$4,500,000

Project placed under construction: July 1969

Projected occupancy: September 1971

Floor plans and selected renderings are depicted on the  
following pages.



Appendix A

First Floor — Oberlin College Gymnasium  
Architects: Hugh Stubbins and Associates

December 10, 1973

RECEIVED  
DEC 10 1973  
DEAN OF THE COLLEGE

TO: Deans Langler, Reich, Wilkenfeld  
CFC  
President Fuller

FROM: Womens Athletic Committee

Enclosed are two letters recently exchanged between Mr. Donaldson and the WAC. Because one of the letters has already been unofficially circulated, the WAC considers the sending of both letters to you appropriate. Furthermore, the WAC believes you should be aware of the unfortunate disintegration of communication within the Physical Education department.

P.C.

Continued.

November 23, 1973

Dear Mr. Donaldson,

It is highly disillusioning that in the year when women at Oberlin are striving for greater competence, welcoming greater recognition, and petitioning greater support of their athletic endeavors; the equipment room manager makes a purchase of purple bikinis for recreational swimming.

This purchase is both insulting and impractical. It is impractical for the equipment room staff as well as for the wearer and it is an unwarranted expenditure for the following reasons:

- 1) The straps fall off the shoulders easily and it is almost impossible to dive without losing the bottoms. Obviously movement is impaired and physical activity restricted.
- 2) It is difficult to coordinate sizes of tops and bottoms and doing so will burden the staff unnecessarily.
- 3) The suits will be ruined more easily in the washing process.
- 4) The department is short of funds. Suits which are inefficient and are wanted by few women, if any, should not have been bought.

Bikinis serve one major function -- exposure. They are good for lying passively in the sun and for showing off your body, period. Since I have not yet seen the sun shine on Carr pool I must assume they were bought to facilitate the latter. It always has been acceptable for women to pursue the sport of being looked at.

A woman would feel no less self-conscious and uncomfortable doing serious swimming or diving in a bikini than a man might feel playing basketball in a jock strap. The Women's Athletic Committee demands an explanation for this purchase.

Sincerely,

*Holly Sklar*

Holly Sklar



Oberlin College  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

Department of Physical Education

November 28, 1973

Holly Sklar  
P.O. Box 2474

Dear Holly Sklar,

Before I continue any further let me say that you can kiss my ass. Who in the hell do you think you are, bitch!! Fuck you and the W.A.C.

Don't ever write any more shit like this to me! If you are not woman enough to confront me face to face with a problem, then I'm not interested in it.

Let me explain (and I won't ever again explain this type of trivial shit (my reasoning). Why should the Physical Education Dept. (the physical education dept. mind you) cater to fat, out of shape women. I mean isn't a part of physical education being aware of the body and how really beautiful it is. Shit, your god-damned right if you're accusing me of being a body freak. And hell yes, I look at women's bodies. Guilty!! I mean I only ordered a few 2 piece suits in sizes 32 and 34 and a couple size 36's. Fat, out of shape women will provide their own swimming suits as far as I'm concerned. I mean, if a woman could wear a two-piece, why would she care one way or another. I did order twice as many one piece suits. What are you, the self-proclaimed spokesman for all women on campus.. Say Holly Sklar, don't you know there are a whole bunch of body freaks on campus, coming into Philips everyday. Why should I overlook them. I'm not one. They requested two-piece suits. The fact that they are psychadelasized is my idea. Yours is the only complaint I've had from a student, although now I'll wait for some silly petition. I mean, the idea of you writing such nonsense to me borders on sickness. You be a student and I'll be an equipment manager.

Since I'm now mellowed out a little since the beginning of this response that you immediately demanded (you don't weigh enough to intimidate me) let me give you my thoughts after working in phys. ed. for three months. As Cass Jackson said in his article in the Review (read it sometime) "Everything at Oberlin is a crisis". . . . . "People are so insecure here they feel threatened by every change". . . . . "You gotta live, and not be so paranoid about life." Well, this is my feeling about you and the W.A.C. You represent, at least at this point in time, to me just!! useless interference in an otherwise exciting existence, and I can promise you the next letter to me of this sort will result in someone having it jammed down their damn throats.

Buster

S.

Why don't you stop by sometime and introduce yourself to me. I don't even know what you look like.

Appendix C

WOMEN ATHLETES AT OBERLIN

<u>ATHLETIC YEAR:</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SPORTS:</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ATHLETES</u>
1975-76	7	129
1976-77	7	150
1977-78	9	148
1978-79	9	181
1979-80	8	148
1980-81	9	140
1981-82	9	140
1982-83	9	152
1983-84	9	144
1984-85	10*	141
1985-86	10	142
1986-87	10	133
1987-88	10	130
1988-89	10	130
1989-90	10	141

\* Soccer made a varsity sport.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS—REGION V  
300 SOUTH WACKER DRIVE - 8TH. FLOOR  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606

R17L  
Appendix D

Continued.

OFFICE OF THE  
DIRECTOR

Dr. James Powell  
Acting President  
Administration Building  
Oberlin College  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

September 1, 1982

RECEIVED

SEP 3 - 1982

DEAN OF THE COLLEGE

OBERLIN COLLEGE

1982

Re: #05812079

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Dr. Powell:

In accordance with the August 27, 1982 letter from Mr. Kenneth A. Mines, Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, this is to apprise you of our data request regarding the Title IX athletic compliance investigation at Oberlin College.

The Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, is responsible for enforcing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq., and the regulations adopted thereunder, 34 CFR Part 106. Title IX provides that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Under the Title IX regulations at 34 CFR 106.41 discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited in athletics programs operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance. Specifically, the regulation states:

(a)General. No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis.

Oberlin College is a recipient of Federal financial assistance and is, therefore, subject to the rules and regulations implementing Title IX as administered by the Office for Civil Rights.

The investigation will assess compliance with the general athletic program requirements of the regulation by comparing the availability, quality and kinds of benefits, opportunities, and treatment afforded members of both sexes. The investigation will take into account non-discriminatory factors that may justify differences in standards and benefits.



Continued.

The above procedures will be applied to the following general athletic program components as well as to the area of financial assistance available to student athletes.

- I. Equipment and Supplies
- II. Scheduling of Games and Practice Times
- III. Travel and Per Diem Allowances
- IV. Opportunity to Receive Coaching and Academic Tutoring
- V. Assignment and Compensation of Coaches and Tutors
- VI. Provision of Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities
- VII. Provision of Medical and Training Facilities and Services
- VIII. Provision of Housing and Dining Facilities and Services
- IX. Publicity
- X. Recruitment
- XI. Provision of Support Services

In order to facilitate a mutually productive and efficient on-site investigation, we request that you submit the data requested on the attachment to our office within twenty (20) days after receipt of this letter.

It is our responsibility to inform you that if any individual is harassed or intimidated by the College because of this compliance investigation or participating in its investigation, such individual may file a complaint alleging such harassment or intimidation with our office.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, and its pertinent regulations, 34 CFR Part 5, it is the policy of this office to release this letter and all related material to any interested party upon request.

Page 3 - Dr. James Powell

We ask that you identify a contact person with whom we can discuss our handling of the investigation. At the earliest date possible, please have this person call Ms. Catherine Martin, Branch Chief, at (312) 353-4115. Ms. Martin will promptly answer any questions your designee may have about this letter thus obviating any unnecessary delays in the submission of the material we are requesting. This procedure will expedite our handling of the case while simultaneously providing any assistance that your staff may require in fully responding to our letter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (312) 353-3865 or Ms. Martin at (312) 353-4115.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mary Frances O'Shea  
Director  
Postsecondary Education Division

Attachment

*TCP sent copy to Archie -  
will talk to him also.  
bn.*